Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment

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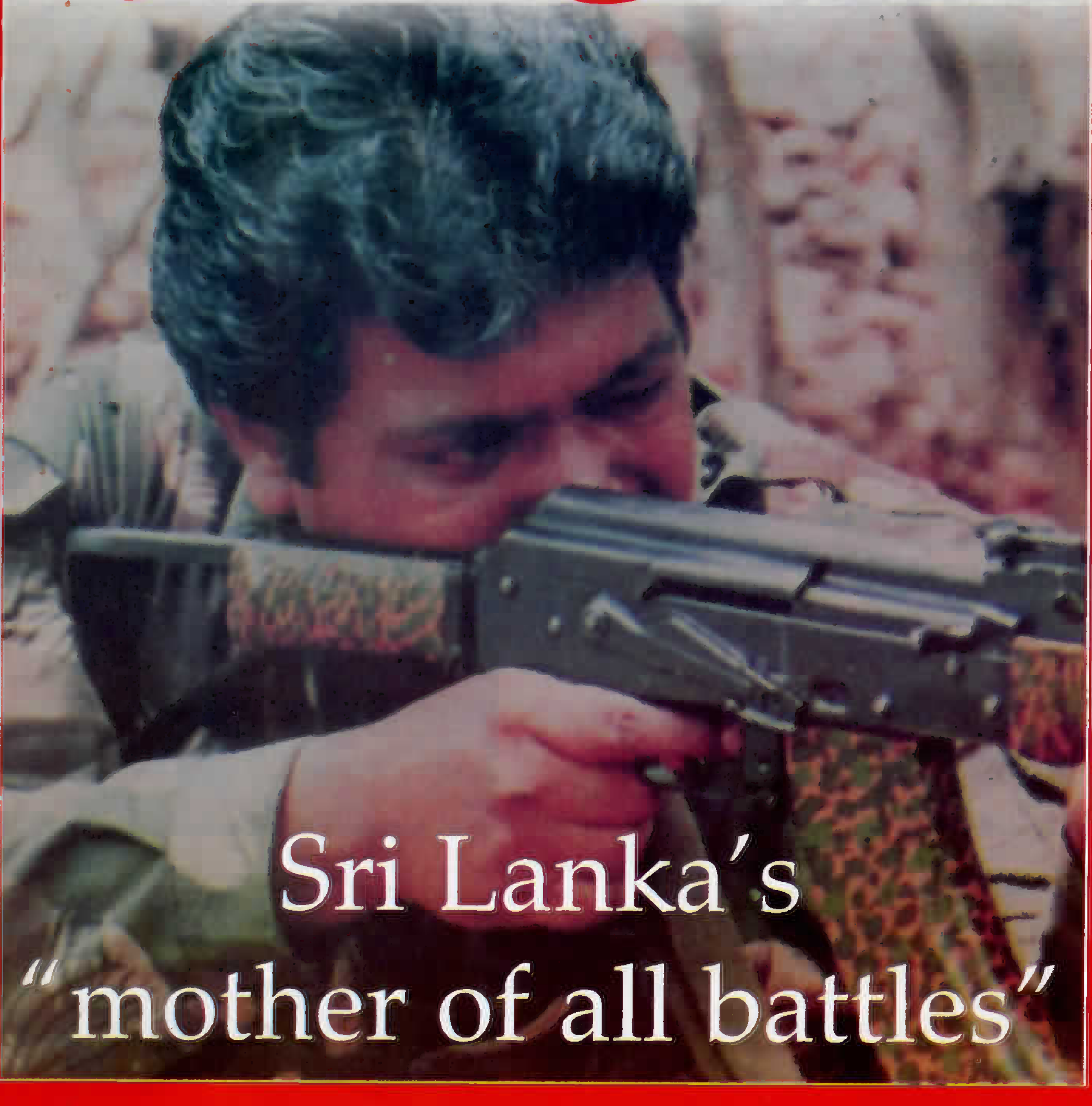

Sri Lanka's "mother of all battles"

What happened to Sri Lanka's mother of all battles?

The leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) Mr. V. Prabhakaran In a statement issued on 13 May 98 to mark the anniversary of the Sri Lankan military offensive operation called "Jayasikuru" (Victory Assured) described the Government's military campaign as a monumental disaster. Sri Lanka suffered an unprecedented casualty rate in the year long battle, with over 3000 Sinhala soldiers killed and 7000 injured, Mr. Prabhakaran said. The Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga is driving the country towards the path of destruction impelled by a singular passion to dominate and subjugate the Tamil homeland by military means, he further said.

"It was a monumental disaster"

The following are extracts from Mr. Prabhakaran's statement:

"Today is a significant day in the history of our national liberation struggle, it marks the end of a year during which we have resisted and fought against the biggest ever offensive operation launched by the Sri Lankan armed forces code named "Jayasikuru", This operation has not yet come to an end but dragging on for a year though it was programmed for three months and began with much publicity and propaganda. The battle has assumed historical significance as the longest military operation not only in the history of Eelam war but also In the global history of armed conflict. Our liberation movement has made this remarkable military achievement by putting up fierce resistance crippling the forward mobility of the enemy forces in the Wanni jungles.

"Jayasikuru" operation is not an ordinary battle, it has been the mother of all battles that flared up on our soil. In this confrontation, the enemy mobilised all his strength and resources at his command. We fought against a formidable force of thirty thousand troops belonging to three army divisions with its special forces and commando units, supported in the rear by thousands of navy and police personnel. The enemy forces used maximum fire power by utilising heavy artillery, tanks, super-sonic bombers and fighter helicopters. In the manner of an aggression on a hostile land, the Sinhala army invaded Vanni, the heart of the Tamil nation.

What is the strategic objective behind this military offensive? What are the underlying political motives of this military campaign? The Government claims that this military operation is aimed at opening the Kandy highway that will facilitate travelling of the Tamil people. But it is not the real objective. The Government has different motives which are sinister and dangerous.

The Kandy highway runs through the Vanni region. By capturing this strategic road, the Sinhala regime calculated that it could bifurcate the geographical unity of the Tamil homeland. Secondly, the Sinhala Government was well aware that Wanni was an LTTE controlled area where the headquarters as well as the military and administrative structures of our liberation movement operated. Therefore, the Government assumed that the LTTE would be compelled to confront the Sinhala army if an all-out offensive was undertaken in the Vanni heartland. In such a military confrontation the objective of the Sinhala chauvinists was to utilise maximum man power and fire power to destroy the military capability of the LTTE and to bring an end to the Tamil freedom movement.

The grand strategy of Chandrika's Government is to eliminate the Tamil Tigers and to effect a forced linkage between the North and South, thereby finding a permanent solution to the Tamil national question by military means. This is the hidden plan encapsulated in the Government's well known concept 'war for peace'. With this sinister strategy "Jayasikuru" offensive operation launched on the Vanni soil.

From the very beginning we realised that the offensive operation of the enemy has dangerous designs. We realised that this military campaign posed a serious challenge not only to the territorial unity of the Tamil homeland but also to the very existence of our liberation movement. Therefore, we were firmly determined to fiercely resist the offensive with all our power and potential. Accordingly we worked out our strategy and tactics to thwart the forward movement of the advancing columns and to inflict heavy losses on the enemy.

Before the launching of the operation "Jayasikuru" the Sri Lankan political and military high command miscalculated the military strength and determination of the LTTE. Based on our strategic withdrawal from Jaffna Peninsula and on our non-engagement in the 'Edibala' operation, Sri Lanka Government entertained a theory that the LTTE was militarily weakened. This misconception led the army high command to believe in an assured victory and made them to issue time-frames for the campaign. Ultimately the military establishment has had to face humiliation.

We were prepared to confront 'Jayasikuru' troops. We re-organised

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Editorial Comment

SRI LANKA : IT'S THE END OF THE ROAD

ISRAELI Kfir Jets! *Chinese F-5 and F-7 supersonic interceptors!* RUSSIAN Mi-24 HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS! **American Bell 212s!** ARGENTINIAN PUCARA GROUND ATTACK AIRCRAFT! **Ukrainian Antonov-32s!** CHECHOSLOVAKIAN T-55 BATTLE TANKS! **Chinese Y-8s! Y-12s! ISRAELI UAV SPY PLANES ! Avros !** ISRAELI DVORAS! Super Dvoras! AMERICAN (secret) GREEN BERET COMMANDO TRAINING! Major Generals by the dozen! **AIR MARSHALS! Rear Admirals!** *A DEFENCE CHIEF WITH A WALKING STICK WITH A PROPENSITY FOR ANNOUNCING DEADLINES THAT ARE NEVER KEPT!* **A Professor given in charge of the begging bowl!** A FOREIGN MINISTER WITH A TAMIL NAME APPEALING TO THE BIG WIDE WORLD: BAN! BAN! BAN! What hectic activity in the island paradise! WHAT A SHOW OF MILITARISM IN THE LAND OF THE BUDDHA!

Now pause for a moment, and imagine the following scenario . A visitor from outer space, unacquainted with earthly affairs, but happening to land in Sri Lanka one day, looks around, and imagines what appears to him a World War III situation. Can you blame him if he pops the question : With which powerful foreign power are you engaged in this high-pressure war ? The Foreign Minister with a Tamil name, momentarily suffering from jet-lag, is about to jump up and declare : "We're fighting the LTTE's child soldiers"! The wrong line to say in a wrong situation, but one stern look in his direction from the woman president of the country makes him subside to his seat. The trouble about that man is, he has to sing for his supper, and he sings well, and sings loud, but he sings the same song all the time. It is either "BAN, BAN BAN", or Child Soldiers".

That of course is meant to be a farcical scenario. But the real life situation in Sri Lanka is no less farcical. Successive Sinhala regimes - the Jayawardenes, the Premadasas, the Wijetungas and the Chandrikas and Ratwattes - have been carrying on this war for fifteen years now, against one single enemy; not an external enemy, but one small one across the ethnic fence, within the four corners of a little island. If military hardware from ten different countries , and military training from three or four governments, cannot help you to win this ruinous war, ruinous both for your economy and your image in the outside world, why keep on trying ? Does it not give you a sense of shame of your own inadequacy?

That the end of the war is not in sight, is something you can see yourself. You call this a war for peace. But the peace is not in sight. Madame President says that a "viable solution" to this conflict must be "soon found". But that solution is not in sight. You say you are fighting terrorists. But these terrorists appear to be a species hitherto unknown in history. They are fighting you face to face. In open combat. They gather in the thousands (have you heard of any other country in the world where they gather in the thousands ?) and then they overrun your well fortified camps, as they did at Mullaitivu where they killed one thousand two hundred of your soldiers in one go, captured your heavy weapons, took them away at their own leisure, and then turned those very weapons against you . Does that look like terrorism to you ?

(continued on page 3)

What They Say

"Sri Lanka is using more than one strategy to alienate the Tamils from western governments. They range from diplomatic pressure to hiring public relations firms The government also needs to hide the atrocities committed by its armed forces against Tamil civilians. By supporting LTTE and exposing the human rights violations, the expatriate Tamils are denying Sri Lanka a free hand to deal with the LTTE. This has made the Tamils, the target".

- Professor A.J.Wilson, former head of Political Science, University of New Brunswick, Canada, quoted by South Asia Media Services (SAMS)

* * * * *

"The greatest challenge that lies before us today is ending the war and restoring peace; uniting the BROKEN and disunited nation and creating a prosperous society".

-Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga in her May Day message, 1998

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"We support a political solution which recognizes the legitimate interests of all the PEOPLES of Sri Lanka while preserving the unity of the country".

- U.S.ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson, after meeting with President Kumaratunga in Colombo. (AP report, April 18).

* * * * *

"It would be up to the people of Sri Lanka and its leaders to resolve the ethnic issue. No outsider should seek to prescribe, let alone impose , a solution on Sri Lanka. All friends of Sri Lanka are greatly concerned about the level of suffering".

- Commonwealth Secretary General Chief Emeka Anyaoku in Colombo, April 20.

* * * * *

"If there is credible evidence that Mr.Prabhakaran, nobody else, is willing to talk of negotiated settlement, outside of a separate state, certainly we will talk".

- Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar (Reuters,)

* * * * *

"India cannot turn a blind eye to what is happening in Sri Lanka, when it has 50 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu. We have to take into account the feelings of the Tamils there ".

- Gen.A.S.Kalkat, former chief of the Indian "Peace Keeping Force" (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in an interview with SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, April 26, '98

* * * * *

"India should take a friendly interest in Sri Lanka because we cannot be idle spectators when a house in the neighbourhood is on fire...."

- Nagendra Nath Jha, a former High Commissioner for India in Sri Lanka, and now the ruling B.J.P.'s Convenor of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the party, talking to Indian journalists in Colombo.

* * * * *

"Members of the security forces continued to torture and mistreat detainees and other prisoners, both male and female,particularly during interrogation. Pro-government Tamil militants in the east and north, directly responsible to the security forces, also engaged in torture. Most torture victims were Tamils suspected of being LTTE insurgents or collaborators".

U.S. State Department's Sri Lanka country report on human rights practices for 1997.

* * * * *

"While the Sri Lankan general staff has changed at frequent intervals (by retirement, death on duty and so on), the LTTE has been commanded by one man throughout the entire period from the beginning right up to now. There is thus a strong presumption that he must know, if not more than, at least as much as, his Sinhala counterparts about this war"

- Air Vice Marshal (retd. Harry Goonetilleke quoting PRAVADA, a Colombo journal.

* * * * *

International

"The United States is one of the main promoters of terrorism, of State terrorism, of invasions, and of a series of actions throughout modern history against numerous Third World countries. I think that the surprising thing is that the United States itself is not on that list".

- Cuban Foreign Ministry spokesman Alejandro Gonzalez, rejecting the continued inclusion of Cuba in the annual U.S.list of world "terrorism" sponsors.

* * * * *

"This country has suffered many a misfortune but none greater than the persistence in our public life of a despicable character called Subramaniam Swamy. His has been a life of character assassination, malicious mendacity and sordid blackmail of anyone who happens to cross his path.... This diseased insect cannot be disinfected. He has to be crushed and carefully incinerated. It is not enough to throw him into the gutter. That is his natural habitat. There he will grow and flourish"

- Indian Union Minister for Urban Development and prominent lawyer Ram Jethmalani. (Asian Age, London)

* * * * *

You say that the north is part of Sri Lanka. So why do you keep bombing your own territory from the air ? Is it because you are assuming already that it is a different country ? You say you are bombing only terrorists. Aren't there terrorists in Trincomalee? Why not bomb Trinco too? Of course you won't. Because of the Sinhala presence there . You don't want Sinhalese to die. Do you therefore mean by that that the Tamil civilians getting bombed in the north are not Sri Lankans? That their lives are not your concern? So why keep up all these pretences, act in one way, talk in another way, and lead a life of hypocrisy? Why not allow the Tamils to live peacefully in their own homeland, a dry, arid homeland that is of no use to you, when you have your own lush green country; mountains and rivers that Nature gave you, and a revenue-earning Tea heartland which the British colonialists left you as patrimony - from one colonialist to another - and be satisfied with it ? Why not save all the monies you invest on destructive weaponry and use that in giving bread to your rural poor?

A monster that is used to kill Tamils

Your army has an approved strength of 110,000, a number which your government is unable to achieve, despite lowering of standards of recruitment, and despite all the noise you make about Sinhala patriotism and Tiger terrorism. Why?

Army desertions have been reaching an all-time high. Fifteen thousand have run away from the battlefield, according to your own army commander Lt.Gen.Rohan Daluwatte (*SUNDAY OBSERVER,* 10 May). Despite eight amnesties and appeals made by your government, they refuse to come back. You are now hunting:for them, offering rewards to those who give information about their whereabouts, and going about arresting them. Do you think you can now catch them by the scruff of their necks and send them back to battle? Can't you see that they are no longer willing to come back in body bags, all because some people want to make sure of their commissions on arms deals?

So desperate for manpower that you face in your attempt to strangle the to-be-born Tamil nation-state at its birth that your army commander is now eyeing the schools, the school leavers he says, from the so-called "good" schools, with the "right social background". Imagine the old Royalists and old Thomians leaving behind cricket, the cocktail circuit and the good life in Colombo to rot in the Mankulam jungle ! No dear Sinhala patriots, your army commander is as stupid about this as he is in the conduct of the war. Let us face it: you dont have manpower; you dont have the stomach to fight; you dont have a cause to fight. Why not allow all living beings to be happy,as the greatest Hindu of all time, Gautama the Buddha (you must have heard of him?) said in his time.

Cant you see the creeping desperation in your own outlook as a people? You are organising rallies and marches outside your own country, making wild statements about the Tamil Tigers which you yourself know are not true, and begging the whole world to help you. All because you are unable to help yourselves. Are you not losing faith in your own strength as a people ? Or is it that you are driven by a fear that you as Sinhalese are a sinking race ? If that was the case, isn't that all the more reason why - you should learn not to terrorise another nation of people, and worsen your sense of insecurity?

It is time for serious reflection on the part of every Sinhalese who is still living in a cuckoo land of his own making. It is the end of the road, not only for the Jaya Sikurui troops holed up in Mankulam, but the end of the road for Sinhala hegemonism. It was a wise French writer of the l9th century, Victor Hugo, who said : "There is one thing stronger than all the armies of the world, and that is an idea whose time has come ". That idea is an independent Tamil Eelam.

S.Sivanayagam

Rajiv Gandhi murder verdict: "Judicial terrorism", says ex-Supreme Court judge

New Delhi,April 29: Making a forceful plea for abolition of capital punishment, former Indian Supreme Court judge V.R.Krishna Iyer has said the death sentence given to 26 persons in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case "is a kind of judicial terrorism".

"Let the judges arrive at a decision. But in my opinion it is a kind of judicial terrorism", Justice Iyer said at a public meeting on the abolition of capital punishment, organised by the Human Rights Trust here on April 28.

Mr. Krishna Iyer

"An eye for an eye. A death sentence for a death is absolutely ridiculous and could not be termed as justice but a violent or barbaric act", he said, and suggested extension of the period of imprisonment in place of death penalty.

"It is foolish to think that by awarding death sentence to a person who has committed murder you can prevent other murders", he said, adding, "the death sentence has no effect at all on future murderers. In most of the cases murder is committed in a sudden outburst and rarely is it planned".

Urging the government to join the 70-odd countries who have abolished capital punishment, Justice Iyer argued that there was no justification for execution if one wants to abide by the principle of deterrence.

PIC: FRONTLINE

PIC: FRONTLINE

Some of the women sentenced to death in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination trial being shifted out of the court-cum-jail premises after the verdict

The United Kingdom which had been known for awarding a large number of capital punishments in the past has now abolished it and that has not resulted in an unusual spurt in crime there, Justice Iyer said. "When India has adopted a major portion of the British constitution, why not follow it in the case of abolishing execution". He said in a majority of cases it was not the rich man who was executed but a poor man who could not engage good lawyers.

Senior Supreme Court lawyer R.Venkataramani also advocated abolition of capital punishment saying "death penalty has failed as a deterrent". He also urged like-minded people to join hands to put pressure on the government to sign the 1991 United Nations treaty on abolition of capital punishment. ❑

THE BLOODY HIGHWAY TO JAFFNA

Lt.Col.Anton J.N.Selvadurai

1. The Sinhala army in the North is more or less marooned without adequate replacement of men and material as their air supply and sea supply routes have been effectively cut off by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam under the leadership of General Prabhakaran. I use the term "General" as the world is fully aware of his Generalship, unlike General Ratwatte who was promoted to this rank by his cousin Chandrika for purely political and family reasons. As the Sunday Leader editorial commented "His rise has been the rise of the ultimate Crony".

2. As a result of being cut off by air and sea the army was forced into opening the land route to Jaffna from Vavuniya, mostly through untankable country. The onset of the monsoon rains only compounded the hapless situation of the Sri Lankan army.

3. As Joseph Pararajasingham said, "The capture of the highway will be a boost for the government, but on the other hand will escalate the war". Former Air Force Commander Harry Goonatilleke said, "Tigers would be happy that the military is extending its logistics line, because as the line gets longer, they will be more easy to attack." It seems obvious to me that Harry wants the army to withdraw and let the Tamils have their right of self-determination. That is what any honest right thinking Sinhala would want, though there doesn't appear to be many right thinking ones among them.

4. Not only will the logistical line get longer, it will also need adequate air cover and force the small Air Force to deploy all its planes and run the risk of anti-aircraft fire with ground to air missiles.

5. With insufficient troops to defend Jaffna, Guerrilla activity there is bound to increase.

Army reprisals will only make the situation more deadly and vicious with the civilian population rising against the army with a possibility of stone throwing retaliation like in Palestine.

6. As a matter of fact, it could be argued that it may be strategically a good thing to let the army have the highway to avoid loss of LTTE cadres in fighting for it, as supply columns make exceedingly good "Tiger Fodder" - like the famous Mr. Kiplings' cakes of England, sold by Mr. El Fayad, at Harrods of London. The army would be subject to constant ambush along the "bloody highway to hell". Tigers using the principles of surprise and concentration of force like Napoleon did, will kill and plunder supplies, and spirit away into the jungle in a flash, in classic guerrilla style of Mao Tse Tung. They would have by now shot away the few planes and helicopters of the Air Force with their SAM missiles which they now possess and probably with more to come.

> *"The conduct of the war is a sad reflection of the Generalship of the Sinhala military"*

7. There is also the possibility that very soon the Tamil army of Prabakaran would acquire their own fighter planes - something the people of the Lion never dreamed would be possible.

8. **Morale is the single most important factor in war. By now the morale of the Sinhala troops would be at a very low ebb.** You can see it happening this very moment when soldiers are not being fed and clothed properly. Even the police have started to riot because of bad food and low morale. Even in Parliament, there is a lowering of morale with the UNP keeping away from Parliament and the government accused of corruption. Even the President has been criticised for not declaring her assets properly, and many people are wanting the war to be ended. Young men are joining the army just to support their starving families.

9. The economy is finding it more and more difficult to support the war, which is taking away billions of rupees for the Defence Budget. **The Sinhala people are now realising that it is really not possible to annihilate a minority nation, in order to make Sri Lanka a unitary Sinhala Buddhist state, as the Mahavamsa would want them to believe. Some of them probably still believe that Vijaya's father, was really, biologically sired, by a lion!!**

10. **A lack of leadership and statesmanship has misled the sim-**

ple Sinhala Simon along the wrong path. Since the leaders are of the people the quality of leadership and statesmanship reflects the quality of the people. This is sad, because it has also drawn innocent Tamils into the vortex of failure and doom.

The conduct of the war is a sad reflection of the Generalship of the Sinhala military. Once again, we could only blame Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism, which has been the curse of the Paradise Isle. This seems obvious and one doesn't have to be a professor to come to such a conclusion. A leading Maha Nayake Thero has spirited away Rs. 1,500 million from the banks with the assistance of the previous UNP Government. Even the Tooth relic in Kandy is considered non-human. In 1965 I was a major in the army and given the responsibility of guarding the Buddha Tooth relic from Burma, which was displayed at the Independence Hall in Colombo. The tooth I saw was about 3.5" long and was curled and twisted,without the slightest resemblance to a human tooth. The Buddha was a Nepalese whose average height is below 5' 3", which I observed when I went to Nepal a few weeks ago. Even if the Buddha was over 6' tall he could never have possessed the tooth that I saw. What I can't understand is why can't they have placed a normal human tooth or a look-alike instead of having something abnormal and obviously suspicious? Something that was done to exploit the adoration and the gullibility of people who lived hundreds of years ago, is now catching up on the Buddhist hierarchy, and shaming the glorious Buddha Dhamma.

12. It is really hoped that Buddhism will now come to the rescue of the Sinhala people and endow them with the power to think rationally and realistically and help in resolving their ethnic problem, with the spirit of Prema, Karuna and Metha.

13. **Eventually, the Karmic laws of cause and effect will liberate the downtrodden Tamil nation. That time is now here and soon the highway to Jaffna will be our way, and ours alone. Even the stars say so!** ❑

Did a LTTE "child army" halt 30,000-strong Jayasikuru forces?

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar's accusations that the Liberation Tigers have built up a military force by conscripting very young children is absurd, senior LTTE officials told Mr. Olara Otunnu, UN Special Representative on Children in Armed Conflict, last Thursday, according to the Voice of Tigers radio. The LTTE denounced Kadirgamara's accusations as an attempt by the Sri Lankan Govt. to tarnish the LTTE, said the Voice of Tigers (VoT) today. Mr. S.P. Thamilchelvan and Dr. Anton Balasingham of the LTTE had met Mr. Otunnu and had had discussions. Ottunu had told the LTTE delegation that they are visiting various countries, including Sri Lanka, to obtain first hand information on difficulties faced by children in war and what measures should be taken to protect the children's' interest, said the VoT. He also assured them that the UN wished to start projects that protect children and to start rehabilitation projects, according to the VoT. The LTTE told the Mr. Otunnu, that the Sri Lankan government was waging a war against the Tamil people in their own land and that the Tamil people, as a whole, were being subjected to great hardships and sufferings, said the radio. The conflict has caused widespread destruction and Tamil children are severely affected by this war, the radio said. The LTTE is fighting the Sri Lankan Government troops to win the rights of the Tamil people, on the basis of the right to self determination, the LTTE told Mr. Otunnu, according to the radio. **The LTTE had also told him how Sinhala forces had attacked and destroyed schools and how a large number of school children have been killed and injured. They also told him children are severely traumatised due to aerial bombing and shelling.** Children are undergoing extensive hardships when they have to flee areas of fighting, and even when they live in refugee camps, the radio quoted them as saying. The Sri Lankan Government was responsible for all these hardships that the Tamil children are facing, they told UN official, according to the radio. The LTTE delegation also pointed out that the Tigers had been effectively resisting an assault in the Vanni by nearly 30,000 Sri Lankan soldiers, for almost a year, inflicting heavy losses in men and material on the SLA. **If Mr. Kadigamar seriously believes that a child army can achieve this, then it shows his childish and silly views", the LTTE said, according to the radio. The LTTE delegation also told Mr. Otunnu that the Liberation Tigers are currently looking after more than 1500 children affected by the war.** The LTTE officials also explained to him how successive Sinhala governments have oppressed the Tamil people, the radio said. ❑

Sri Lanka to buy 4 more MI-24's

The Sri Lankan air force is expected to buy up to four Mi-24 helicopter gunships from Ukraine for its battle against Tamil Tiger guerrillas, a state-run Sunday newspaper said . A defence ministry team had just returned after negotiations with Ukraine authorities on the purchase at an undisclosed price, the Sunday Observer said.

It said at least two should be delivered soon. The air force began using Mi-24 gunships for the first time in November1995.

Three more were added later but two have been lost during operations against Tamil Tiger guerrillas. The air force has a dismal flying record, losing over two dozen aircraft since the latest round of fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and government forces erupted in April 1995. ❑

NEWS BRIEFS

Vavuniya mine blast: 5 PLOTE men killed

Five members of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), including one of its senior member, alias Sinnathasan, were killed and ten others wounded, on May 12 around 1.15 (07.15 GMT) when the two vehicles they were travelling in were caught in a mine blast Umamaheswaran Road in Vavuniya, said sources in Vavuniya.

However, PLOTEs military wing leader, Mr. Manikathasan survived said sources in Vavuniya.

The mine blast took place near an SLAs sentry post, said sources.

Sri Lanka to arrest army deserters

Sri Lanka on Monday launched a massive campaign to arrest thousands of army deserters who failed to respond to a five-day amnesty, senior military officials said.

``We have started the second phase of the operation, that is to arrest the deserters who did not respond to the amnesty," Brigadier K.B. Egodawela, head of the army personnel administration unit, told Reuters.

Egodawela said over 5,000 soldiers had responded to the army's final amnesty which ended at midnight on Sunday. The army had granted seven amnesties since 1990, but before the latest one was declared some 15,000 deserters had not returned. Sri Lanka's deputy defence minister, Anuruddha Ratwatta, told local journalists last week the government was considering compulsory military service if the amnesty and recruitment efforts failed to bring in the necessary number of soldiers.

The military is also planning a recruitment drive to encourage school leavers to join the army after recent efforts to enlist soldiers had received poor response.

Shot dead by vengeful cop

Mohammed Haniffa Mohideen (60) was shot dead at point blank range around 12:00 noon on May 8 in his home at Aiyankerni in Eravur, 6 km north of Batticaloa, allegedly by a Sri Lankan policeman, said sources in Batticaloa.

Mohideen, a labourer, who had just returned from Kalmunai, a town south of Batticaloa, was seated in the hall of his home when he was shot twice, first through the head and then the heart, said sources.

Relatives claim that Mohideen had had problems with policemen at a police post nearby, because they repeatedly visited his house and harassed his daughter.

Relatives said that the policemen even had the habit of peeping in when the girl was bathing.

Mohideen, incensed by the behaviour of the policemen had reprimanded them severely on a number of occasions during the past week.

Following the incident A.Mowlana, MP (United National Party, Batticaloa District) has faxed Anuruddha Ratwatte, the Deputy Minister of Defence, urging that an inquiry should be held on the shooting and for the policemen involved to be transferred immediately.

He has also said that the killing of Mohideen was an act of vengeance because he had prevented his daughter from being raped at gun point.

The town, comprising a majority of Muslims, was appalled by the killing and the audacity with which it was carried out, according to residents.

Mass release of criminals

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga has ordered the mass release of 3,350 convicted criminals as a sign of goodwill to mark the major Buddhist festival of Vesak, state radio said.

The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation said it was the largest number of inmates freed during one amnesty.

Richardson to quit UN job

Word is out that Bill Richardson is leaving his job at the United Nations to work in Washington as a member of the Clinton Cabinet.

Richardson will step down as U.S. ambassador to the U.N. to take over as energy secretary. He will replace Federico Pena, who earlier announced he was leaving.

Human Rights NGO quits Sri Lanka

A London-based human rights group on Wednesday said its work in Sri Lanka was brought to an abrupt end recently when the government demanded the right to censor the organisation's reports.

Peace Brigades International (PBI) said it had officially pulled out of the country after being told it must submit reports to authorities before publication if it wished to remain working in Sri Lanka.

It said it was given the order during a meeting on Monday with officials from the ministries of defence, foreign affairs and other departments.

"PBI believes that placing such restrictions on local and international human rights observers is unacceptable," said a PBI statement released by its London office.

"When such measures are applied to non-partisan NGO (non-governmental organisation) witnesses whose presence can increase respect for human rights, the result is counterproductive: these measures undermine trust in the government, and weaken the possibilities for achieving true democracy and respect for human rights," the statement said.

PBI, which has had a presence in Sri Lanka since 1989, said as a result its representatives had been unable to receive the residence visas necessary to work in the country.

It said its work in the east of the country, scene of much of the fighting in Sri Lanka's long-running ethnic separatist war, was also "noticeably hindered by the limitations on access to the region" imposed by the government.

"Under these circumstances we were forced to withdraw much more abruptly than we had planned," Anne Harrison, chair of PBI's International Council, said in a letter to President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Senior foreign ministry officials contacted by Reuters declined to comment. It said since PBI's arrival it had published regular reports on the human rights situation and distributed them internationally.

Conscription warning by Ratwatte

Sri Lanka's deputy defence minister has said compulsory military service will be declared if an amnesty fails to rope in some 15,000 army deserters, the independent Island newspaper reported on Tuesday.

"The government has decided on compulsory military service if ongoing attempts to bring back deserters fail," Anuruddha Ratwatte told local journalists late on Monday.

The compulsory service will be for those between 18 and 30 years, the minister said. No further details were given.

The government had earlier threatened to impose conscription after receiving a poor response to several army recruitment drives.

The military has also drawn up a plan to attract school leavers and others to join the army to fight Tamil Tiger guerrillas in the country's north and east.

Rats attack bodies in Colombo mortuary

The mortuary at Sri Lanka"s premier hospital has turned into a national disgrace with bodies there lying on the bare floor or on trolleys for several weeks and being attacked by rats or other insects.

Upto the weekend the mortuary was packed with 80 bodies-more than double the number it is equipped to cope with. So nearly 45 bodies were lying on the floor and at least three have been attacked by rats which have eaten up the eyes and lips.

The deadly nightmare at the mortuary was revealed when a woman complained to police in her area that the body of her sister had been attacked by rats. National hospital director Dr. S.T.G. de Silva yesterday acknowledged that the situation in the morgue was unmanageable and deplorable but assured that things were now under control.

He said the morgue had only 36 coolers or drawers for bodies while last week there were upto 80 bodies mainly because of the spate of holidays and the inability to inform the next of kin due to the postal crisis. He sad the morgue urgently needed more coolers to cope with increasing demands. Assistant City Coroner Justin Perera confirmed that at least three bodies had been attacked by rats while other mortuary workers revealed that the place was stinking and infected with rodents.

They said some of the mortuary workers were reluctant or refusing to go in because of the terrible conditions there.

Air Force officers arrested

Two Airforce officers, one of them a personal bodyguard of ex Airforce Commander Oliver Ranasinghe were remanded in connection with the alleged attack and death threat on The Sunday Times Consultant Editor and Defence Correspondent Iqbal Athas in February.

The two officers , Squadron Leader Rukman Herath personal bodyguard of the former air chief, and Flight lieutenant Pradeep Kannangara who surrendered themselves to the CID were produced in the Gangodawila Magistrates court.

Mr. Athas identified Sq. Ldr. Herath as the person who held the revolver at his head while his wife Anoma identified the second officer as one of those involved in the attack on their Nugegoda residence on Feb. 12.

The two officers were remanded until May 8 and driven away handcuffed in a prison vehicle.

LTTE overruns army-police camp

LTTE forces launched an assault on a combined army-police camp at the 64th mile post in Mutur on May 3. Within a matter of 20 minutes the whole camp fell to the LTTE. One Sri Lankan soldier and ten para-military policemen were killed. All military personnel fled the camp the moment they realised an attack was in progress. Some arms and ammunitions were captured including one 60 MM Mortar and eleven 60 MM shells. The LTTE forces did not suffer any casualties. The LTTE units also ambushed a reinforcement sent from the nearby GPS army camp. They also shelled the GPS army camp.

8000 young women widowed in Jaffna

Figures released by an independent study group reveal that 8,000 young Tamil women have become widows during the last 8 years in Jaffna district, as a result of Sri Lankan military attacks. Tamil orphans run to more than 8,000. 'Disappearances' are another serious problem, the report points out. Several people are mentally affected due to the government's war, the report adds.

Army communication dump explodes

An army ammunition dump in the main army base near the northern Vavuniya town exploded on May 3, killing one soldier and destroying nearly 100,000 rounds of ammunition and weapons. The explosion had been triggered off when a hand grenade which fell on the ground had accidentally exploded.

May Day rally in the Vanni

Several thousands of Tamils attended the international May day celebrations in LTTE-run areas of Akkarayan, Visvamadu, Puthukudiyiruppu and Mullaitivu (in Vanni). At the rallies, petitions and memorandums were released to Government officials and NGOs denouncing the Sinhalese government for waging a war and restricting food and medicine to Tamils living in the region. People marched with floats depicting knife wielding Sinhalese soldiers killing Tamil civilians. Other floats carried models showing Sri Lankan war planes bombing Tamil homes with people in it. Yet other floats showed the various self-help schemes the people have undertaken in the region to survive the repression unleashed by the Sinhalese government.

Eight army men killed in Jaffna

LTTE forces attacked various military targets in occupied Jaffna in the last week of April, killing 8 troops. On the 28th, 2 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and 4 injured when LTTE forces attacked an army unit at Thattuvankotti. On the 27th 2 Sri Lankan soldiers died and 3 were injured when LTTE forces attacked an army unit in Allipallai. On May 2 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in Pandaterripu when LTTE fighters ambushed an army unit that came in search of LTTE members staying in the area.

8919 committed suicide in 1997

Sri Lanka, which has the highest suicide rate in the world, has changed the law to decriminalise attempted suicide and thus hopefully save lives.

An amendment bill was passed by parliament making attempted suicide no longer a punishable offence. In the past people who tried and failed to kill themselves could be sent to prison for a year and fined.

"The recognition of such an offence also stigmatises the person concerned as a criminal punishment may in fact aggravate the situation and induce a recurrence," a presidential commission appointed to study suicides said in a report.

Social workers have said that 8,919 Sri Lankans committed suicide last year, mostly due to poverty, free availability of pesticides and broken love affairs.

The 1998 Guinness Book of Records lists Sri Lanka as having the world's highest suicide rate in 1991 at 47 per 100,000 people.

Sri Lanka to buy 500 Indian buses

Sri Lanka will buy 500 buses from neighbouring India at a cost of 900 million rupees (14.5 million dollars) to boost public transport, government spokesman Mangala Samaraweera said.

The 32-seater buses will be financed by the Sri Lankan government without seeking foreign funding, Samaraweera told reporters in Colombo. He said the cabinet approved the purchase but gave no further details.

Tigers attack military base: 3 killed

Tamil Tiger rebels attacked a small military base in the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka on April 29, killing three soldiers and wounding nine, the military said. Sri Lankan helicopter gunships rushed to the base and the rebels withdrew into the jungles near Pansalgodella, a village 230 kilometers (140 miles) east of the capital, said military spokesman Major Kumara Dewage.

Navy fire on Muslim fishermen: 2 killed

Two Muslim fishermen were killed on April 27, when the Sri Lanka Navy gunboats opened fire on them while they were fishing in the Kinniya lagoon. The dead body of one of them, identified as Mohamed Sakiriya, 30, was found today by other fishermen who were setting out for fishing. The body of the other fisherman, Abduhl Samathu Sansan, 20, had not been found yet.

Sinhala man killed by friendly fire!

The Sri Lankan Police, shot and killed a Sinhala villager from Thanthirimalai, 18 k.m. west of Cheddikkulam, on April 26 night. Sirenage Dharmadasa, 18, and two others had gone for hunting in the jungles when the Police opened fire, apparently mistaking them for Tiger fighters.

Ethnic cleansing in Kanthalai

A 20 sq. km Tamil-inhabited area called Kantalai, southwest of Trincomalee, is now being settled by the government with Sinhala colonists.

Retd. police officer N.K.D.S. Gunawardene, now serving as organiser of the ruling SLFP in Trincomalee district, is in charge of the new settlement. Tamil residents of this locality earlier fled after persistent military onslaughts against them. The retired police officer in charge is known to be a man with fierce anti-Tamil sentiments.

25 fishermen killed in 3 months

During the three months from January 1998, over 25 fishermen have been killed in attacks on fishing boats and a loss of 1,735,000 rupees has resulted from Sri Lankan naval attacks on Tamil fishermen and coastal villages in Mullaitivu. Valuable fishing nets, boats and tackle are part of the goods that have been lost as a result.

Singaporean killed in Colombo car crash

A SINGAPOREAN was killed in Sri Lanka when his car crashed head-on into an oncoming van along a poorly-lit highway just outside the capital Colombo. Business consultant Marcus Mok Hin Soong, 43, who had been working for a Colombo garment manufacturer in Sri Lanka for six years, was in the car which rammed into the van at about 1 am on Apri 27.

The accident happened on Havelock Highway, near the town of Maharagama, about 10 km from Colombo. In a phone interview from the town on Thursday, Sergeant H. H. Anura of the Maharagama police station told The Straits Times that Mr Mok had veered into the path of the van while he was overtaking another car.

He suffered serious head injuries and multiple fractures, and died on the spot. His wife and two children, aged nine and 15, were not with him but had remained in Singapore. His two passengers, a Sri Lankan and a Chinese national, were trapped in the car for five minutes. Sgt Anura said: "Luckily, some drivers stopped to help them. By the time we arrived, the injured were already rushed to hospital by the good-hearted motorists."

But the Sri Lankan passenger, Mr S. Vijayakumar, died in hospital on Wednesday morning, he said. The Chinese national, is still in a serious condition.

Tigers not terrorists U.S. envoy told

Tamil party leaders who met US President's special envoy Bill Richardson during a brief meeting on April 18 in Colombo told him that it is essential that the Liberation Tigers should take part in the talks to bring about peace in Sri Lanka.

The US embassy had arranged for the leader of the Ceylon Workers' Congress Mr.S. Thondaman, his secretary Mr.N.Wijeyasingham, TULF secretary general Mr.R sampanthan and EPDP leader Douglas Devananda MP to meet the US envoy briefly to discuss the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Sampanthan had stressed that no political solution to the conflict is viable without the participation of the Liberation Tigers.

The CWC had told the US ambassador that one cannot characterise the struggle of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka historically as terrorism.

They had urged that America should take a keener interest in helping solve the conflict as a third party. One of the Tamil party leaders who met Ambassador Bill Richardson said this morning that none of them had welcomed the US government's designation of the Liberation Tigers as terrorists. One of them said that he had told the US envoy how historically the democratic struggles of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka had been in vain which eventually had compelled the youths to take up arms.

Sources said that Ambassador Bill Richardson had listened to the Tamil leaders but had not categorically responded to their observations except in very broad and general diplomatic terms.

(TamilNet)

Search for husband ends in arrest

Jegaseelan Puvaneswary (24), a mother of two who went in search of her husband - who is held by the Sinhalese military - was herself arrested. She was passing the Valaiyiravu bridge when the Sinhalese soldiers on duty took her into custody. Now that both husband and wife are in different detention camps, their two young children are without proper care.

Tamil trader held in Mannar

Veeravaku Sivalokanathan (24) of Vavuniya district who went to army controlled Mannar to buy goods for his business was arrested last April. He is a resident of Iranai Illuppaikulam, who makes periodic trips to Mannar for business purposes. No further information as to his whereabout is available.

Army officer apologises to Tamil banker

A fundamental rights case before the Supreme Court was settled when an Army officer apologised for the arrest and detention of a bank executive.

Vinayagam Sachithanandan, an officer at the Bank of Ceylon Wellawatte branch had filed a fundamental rights case against Lt. Bandara of the Army and others for illegal arrest and detention in July 1996. He claimed Rs. 1 million for the pain of mind and humiliation and loss of promotional prospects caused to him and his wife who also works in the bank.

When the case came up before a three-judge bench of the Supreme

Court, State Counsel said the Army officer concerned was ready to apologise for the arrest which was made on suspicion after the petitioner and his wife withdrew a large sum from their savings account.

Mr. Sachithananadan agreed to accept the apology and the case was dropped.

Ex-EPDP cadre is abducted in Jaffna

A former EPDP cadre, Kandasamy Jeyakanthan of Saavakkaadu in Suthumalai was abducted on April 18 around 11 a.m. by armed men who came in a blue vehicle in the SLA high security zone of Jaffna town. The incident, according to eye witnesses, took place in front of the Commercial Bank.

Informed sources said that the EPDP is suspected to be behind the abduction of Jeyakanthan. His foster mother said that she has complained to the Sri Lankan Police and the Human Rights Commission office in Jaffna town.

Her son's where about is still not known she said.

(TamilNet)

Govt. informers are warned

The Liberation Tigers have put up printed posters in the Vadamaradchi and Thenmaradchi divisions of the Jaffna peninsula warning people who give information to the Sri Lankan army about their activities. The posters appeared in areas which are under the control of the Sri Lankan army overnight.

Sri Lankan Police sources in Chavakachcheri said that the posters might be a prelude to an increase in LTTE activities in their sector in the coming months. They said that there have been regular reports of infiltration by small but well armed groups of Tigers in the Thenmaradchi sector, particularly through areas like Usan.

The LTTE poster titled 'Final Warning' says -

"It is certain that the foreign army which is occupying our land will be driven out very soon. In the meantime, some civilians are engaged in betraying the people and the land for the sake of petty benefits from the army. There wont be any pardon for those who engage in such activities in the future. We wish to inform you again that this is our final warning". -The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam."

LTTE ambush: 7 policemen killed

Seven Sri Lankan Policemen were killed on the night of April 21 around 10.30 p.m. in Kalmunai in the Ampara district when suspected members of the Liberation Tigers lobbed two grenades into their jeep. Two policemen were wounded in the explosion.

The Police party which was on a routine night patrol had parked in front of the Taj Mahal theatre in the southern part of the town when the grenades were lobbed into their jeep said Police sources in Kalmunai.

"The Tigers shot dead all seven policemen and escaped with the weapons, ammunition and a radio set," a local official said. The attack came a day after heavy fighting raged in the north of the country where at least 50 government soldiers and over 60 rebels were reported killed.

Akkarayan Hospital releases statistics

23 people died in the Akkarayan Hospital in the Vanni in March, according to a report released recently by the Hospital authorities. 24,800 patients were treated in the OPD and 1033 were admitted to the wards in March, the report said. Among the 24,800 patients who were treated in the OPD, 6258 were treated for Malaria, 412 for Typhoid and 32 for rabies the report said. 126 births were also recorded in the hospital last month.

Meanwhile government officers in the areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers in the Vanni who receive their monthly salary as cheques are unable to realise them in government banks due to shortage of cash in the banks, said sources.

Tamil youths beaten up by STF

Thirty eight youths who were rounded up on April 16 in the village of Annamalai, about 36 kilometers south west of Batticaloa, were severely beaten up by the Special Task Force for not reporting to its camp in the area on their arrival from Colombo where they are employed as goldsmiths. The boys had come home to Annamalai on leave for the Tamil New year. Annamalai is a traditional village whose inhabitants are all goldsmiths. Most of these are employed in Colombo as craftsmen of gold jewellery. Many of them were formerly employed in Jaffna as well.

The village, which stands out in stark contrast to its poverty stricken, arid agricultural surroundings, grew exceptionally wealthy in the eighties after many of its youth who were skilled in the old traditions of making gold jewellery found lucrative employment in Colombo, Jaffna and other towns of the island. In due course a large number of these ventured out on their own into the gold jewellery business and made money, the kind of which is very rarely seen in these parts of the Batticaloa district.

The STF normally expects, according to residents of Annamalai, that the goldsmith youth who come on leave or holiday from Colombo or elsewhere should report to its camp on arrival and then regularly pay the grocery and arrack bills of the STF commandos until they (the goldsmiths) go back. The youth who were taken yesterday had not done so. They were not only beaten up but were made to perform hard menial tasks before they were released said residents.

Two of them have sought medical treatment for abrasions and contusions sustained during the STF's assault on them.

The U.S. position on land mines & Child soldiers

“Fifty years ago the United States took the lead in building modern international human rights law. But lately, Washington has been in the public eye for the obstacles it has raised to its further development”, says KENNETH ROTH, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, writing in FOREIGN AFFAIRS of March/April 1998. Says Mr.Roth:

“American reservations surfaced during the past year in negotiations to ban anti-personnel land mines, to prohibit the use of child soldiers, and to establish an international criminal court. In each case Washington paid lip service to the proposal while U.S. negotiators worked to weaken it. Because of these reservations, the international community has shown a new willingness to bypass the United States in strengthening human rights law.

“The negotiations to ban antipersonnel land mines are the most prominent examples of this trend. These indicriminate weapons have appropriately been called weapons of mass destruction in slow motion. Because land mines cannot distinguish between a combatant and a child (as if Sri Lankan artillery shells and aerial bombs can make that distinction - Ed.H.S.), they kill or maim an estimated 26,000 civilians annually. In such war-torn countries as Cambodia, Angola, Somalia, and Bosnia, they exact a terrible toll long after the fighting has ended.

“President Clinton recognizes the humanitarian cost of antipersonnel landmines and endorses their “eventual” abolition. However, the United States was not ready to support an unconditional ban in treaty negotiations because the U.S. military wants to use land mines to defend South Korea for another ten years. (Since when did South Korea become part of the United States ? - Ed.H.S.). The issue is not mines already in the ground, which the United States would have ten years to remove under the new treaty, but its intention to plant more than one million new mines in the event of a North Korean invasion. The U.S. military also wants to exempt certain self-destructing antipersonnel mines that it uses in combination with antitank mines. Fearing a laundry list of such exemptions, other governments in the negotiations, including NATO allies, rejected any loosening of treaty provisions on antipersonnel mines. One hundred twenty two governments signed the treaty. The United States did not.

ARMING THE CHILDREN

The United States also opposes a ban on children under age 18 serving as soldiers. Child soldiers are a large and often neglected humanitarian problem. In countries such as Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Afghanistan, Burma, and Sri Lanka, government or rebel forces have placed guns into the hands of an estimated quarter of a million children, some as young as eight. (In Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A.,a 5-year old kindergarten pupil was arrested after he was found bringing a loaded pistol to school because he wanted to shoot his teacher for punishing him...AP report,May 10). That is America for you - Ed.H.S.) .... These treaties already ban the use of children under 15 as soldiers.: the 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child and the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention of 1949. The United States has signed all three, but has not ratified any of them. However, because of the harm associated with using 15-to 17year olds as soldiers, and because a higher age requirement makes it more difficult to disguise the use of still younger children, a new protocol has been proposed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child requiring soldiers to be at least 18. The protocol would be optional; no government, including those that have ratified the convention, would be required to adopt it.

“The Clinton administration opposes an 18-year old minimum because the U.S. military recruits 17-year old high school students upon graduation rather than waiting for their 18th birthday. Less than one-half of one percent of the U.S. military is composed of such underage recruits. And while almost all recruits reach 18 before completing their training, the U.S. military stands alone in rejecting even a compromise proposal that would keep these soldiers out of combat. Since the Pentagon fears that the United States could face heightened pressure to stop recruiting 17-year olds, U.S. negotiators have taken advantage of the consensus rules governing the negotiations to block other governments from adopting a ban for themselves....

“The international community is growing more comfortable with leaving the United States out on questions of international human rights law *“(SIDELINED ON HUMAN RIGHTS: AMERICA: BOWS OUT- Kenneth Roth. FOREIGN AFFAIRS, Volume 77, No. 2 March/April 1998).*

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War widows, orphans, army deserters . . . . a social upheaval says, doctor

By Farah Mihlar

COLOMBO, April 8 (Reuters) - Sri Lanka's protracted ethnic war is claiming more than lives on the battlefield, psychologists say. The 15 years of conflict have taken a heavy toll on the nation's mental health.

Bomb blasts, road blocks, security clampdowns and continuous identification checks mean a continuous state of anxiety.

"The whole of Sri Lanka is affected in some way or other," said Kamini Alahakoon, a doctor who has worked with victims of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The State of Sri Lanka

"If you are not directly affected, then you will probably have a relative or a friend who will be affected."

Many thousands have died in the war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, who are fighting for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

A rising number of war widows, orphans, army deserters and those missing in action is causing a social upheaval that the country is simply not equipped to handle.

"What is being done is just not enough. We don't have enough counsellors, so we have people who are called befrienders. The best you can do for these people is be their friend," Alahakoon said.

Psychologists said the war was particularly harsh on women and children who had to deal with sudden and permanent changes in their social status after husbands or fathers either died or went missing.

"It is difficult for them to move in society as they are often stigmatised and feel ashamed," Alahakoon said, pointing out that women had to shed overnight their subordinate roles and take charge of the family.

"The impact is huge because you can't get on with your normal life when you don't know whether your husband is dead or alive," said psychologist Ananda Galappati.

According to the Ministry of Rehabilitation, an estimated 8,000 women have been widowed by the war in the northern city of Jaffna alone in the past eight years.

The figures for the rest of the country are not available, but sociologists say the situation is not any better in the south where many soldiers come from.

Children can be the worst off, displaying symptoms such as lethargy, lack of interest in education, emotional outbursts and nightmares.

"Helping children with these problems is tough, because they do not communicate their emotions openly. It isn't good to separate them from other children but when they are together they are stigmatised," said Alahakoon.

If women and children experience trauma, the men have to battle with a different kind of problem - living with disability at a young age.

8000 soldiers disabled

The Institute of Human Rights, which works with crippled servicemen, says the fighting in Sri Lanka, which began in 1983, has left more than 8,000 soldiers disabled.

The psychological impact on these victims is tremendous because they feel they have little to contribute to the society, said an institute official who declined to be identified.

"Because they are disabled they have to reintegrate into their families. After some time their families reject them and they feel useless to society," he said.

Military officials, however, look at it differently.

"Disabled people suffer mentally, but sometimes they are better off because they don't have to return to the war and even though they are disabled they appreciate being alive," a military spokesman told Reuters.

"It is tougher for soldiers because this war has been going on for so long and there is no indication of an end so the psychological impact is bad," he added.

A high rate of desertions in the army however tells another story. One out of every 10 soldiers is seemingly unable to cope with the pressures of the war.

Military officials say at the last count some 12,000 servicemen were reported as deserters. Repeated amnesties have brought few back.

Few social workers could say whether Tiger rebels face similar traumas.

"They must suffer, but it would be relatively less due to their motivation levels," said a psychologist who declined to be identified.

He said most LTTE rebels were brainwashed into fighting for the cause from childhood. "Their high level of motivation is reflected in their willingness so often to act as suicide bombers," he added.

The 1998 Guinness Book of Records lists Sri Lanka as having the world's highest suicide rate, at 47 per 100,000 in 1991, but that rate has been attributed mainly to poverty and failed love affairs. ☐

"20% of Sri Lankan boys have been sexually abused"

By Farah Mihlar

COLOMBO, April 8 (Reuters) - A study shows that one in five Sri Lankan boys has been sexually abused, prompting the government to tighten laws against paedophiles, a top official said.

"According to the statistics we have, based on a study conducted in one part of the country, 20 percent of boys have been sexually abused," Harendra de Silva, chairman of the presidential task force on child protection, told Reuters in an interview.

De Silva said the survey was representative of the larger picture in Sri Lanka, for long considered a safe haven for paedophiles, and that most of the abusers were Sri Lankan.

According to De Silva, boys are the most common victims of child abuse in Sri Lanka.

"It is the reverse of what you see in the West. One of the important aspects here is that a girl's virginity is important at the time of marriage so they are protected in many ways.

"Some people believe that boys can't be abused. Others believe that even if they are abused, it is not a problem," he said.

Sri Lanka was now considering setting up a National Child Protection Authority under a new parliament act to combat the problem, De Silva said.

Legislation had also been drawn up to allow a court to permit videotaped evidence rather than have a child cross-examined in courts, he said.

The present penal code and code of criminal procedure are to be amended to prohibit sexual intercourse with persons under 18 and to permit arrest without warrant in all offences of child abuse, De Silva added.

Child abuse is punishable with a maximum 20 years in jail.

De Silva said the survey also disproved earlier theories that most of the boys were abused by foreigners.

"Domestic paedophilia is a very major problem. If you consider the numbers, foreign paedophiles operating in this country are relatively small," he said.

De Silva said while it was easy to identify and expose a foreign paedophile, combating abuse of children by locals was difficult.

"If I walk on the road holding my son's hand people wouldn't bother, but if a foreigner walks on the street holding the hand of a little boy every one will look at him," he said.

In most cases children abused by family members tended to enter the commercial sex trade, which in the past was a massive problem for the country, De Silva said.

"It is still a big problem, but at least we are trying to erase the phrase 'safe haven' from the description so it will deter people from coming to Sri Lanka for those reasons," he said.

De Silva said according to UNICEF, at least four percent of tourists visiting Sri Lanka were paedophiles.

Recent action to combat the problem had resulted in the prosecution of two foreigners while several others have been deported and imprisoned in their respective countries, he said.

De Silva said the biggest problem was that child abuse victims were more likely than others to abuse children when older.

"There are long-term consequences of sex abuse which means that if a child is abused today there are higher chances that he will abuse others," he said.

De Silva said the study showed that 10 percent of Sri Lankans between the age of 18 and 25 years had sexually abused younger boys. Seventy percent of them were abused as children. ❑

Bombs Harden Emotions in Sri Lanka

By Donna Bryson Associated Press Writer Saturday, May 9, 1998

When the last terror bombing in Sri Lanka's capital killed more than 40 people, counsellors offered to meet with the wounded, widowed or simply frightened. No one was interested. Just two years ago, after one of the first deadly rebel bombings in Colombo, dozens of people had showed up for group therapy sessions organized by the National Council on Mental Health. People have grown used to living with violence, fear and distrust, said the council's director, Dr. Narme F. Wickremesinghe.

After 15 years of ethnic fighting, mainly in the north of this island nation off Indian's southern tip, attitudes and emotions are so hardened that many people find it difficult to see ahead to a time without war.

People open to reconciliation can be hard to find in Colombo, where ethnic animosity has strengthened and spread. The bitterness shows up in the national newspapers that influence society and shape debate, and politicians rise in parliament to fan hatred between the dominant Sinhalese and minority Tamils.

Every time Sanjitha Satyamurthy, a 21-year-old Tamil business student, approaches one of the police checkpoints that dot downtown, she braces herself. Her Sinhalese friends are waved on after producing national identity cards. But once officers see her Tamil name, she's usually asked for proof she has a reason to be in Colombo, in the form of an affidavit from her local police station. ``OK, fine, I carry my police report everywhere. Asked to produce it, I produce it," she said, her words clipped and bare of emotion. She has grown used to the constant suspicion, she said.

European Union's "misleading assessment", on Sri Lanka

International Educational Development, in a statement issued in Geneva on 15 April, has expressed strong reservations on the observations made about Sri Lanka in the Statement by Ambassador Audrey Glover. CMG. Head of Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Behalf of the European Union (EU) (54th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, Agenda Item 10, 14 April 1998)

"We were shocked to read the grossly misleading assessment about Sri Lanka made by Ambassador Audrey Glover. Before proceeding futher ,we quote the relevant section in full.

Para 48. *"The EU calls on all parties to the conflict in Sri Lanka to make every effort to reach a negotiated settlement. The EU condemns terrorist attacks by the LTTE, in particular the bombing of the Temple of the ToothRelic on 25 January, which appears to have been carried out in the hope of provoking communal hostility. The EU welcomes the continuing efforts of the Sri Lankan government to restore normality to the Jaffna peninsula, and their efforts to provide relief supplies to those in the Vanni displaced by the conflict, but is concerned by reports that insufficient food and medical supplies are getting through to these refugees. The EU welcomes the Sri Lankan government's commitment to improve its human rights record, including the establishment of the Human Rights Commission. The EU notes the significant reduction in 'disappearances' in the North and the East since 1996, but remains concerned over continuing ill treatment of detainees, some disappearances, cases of intimidation of journalists, the killing of Tamil civilians in Ampara and Thampalakamam, and failures in many cases to prosecute violators. We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to address these issues."*

"We must express strong reservations to the statement of the EU as follows:

1. **The EU uncritically repeated the Sri Lankan government's disinformation that the bombing of the Temple of the Tooth Relic was carried out to provoke communal violence.**

2. The EU Statement turned a blind eye to the draconian media blockade-mounted by the Sri Lankan government in the North for many years. All print and electronic media are prevented from freely entering and reporting on the conditions in the Jaffna peninsula and the Vanni. Indeed the farcical "conducted tours" organised by the Government to transport periodically selected journalists to the peninsula underlines the cynical "management" of information by the Government. To restrict the flow of information, even the personnel attached to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are forbidden to carry cameras or film rolls into the north. **In the absence of independent verification, the EU Statement merely regurgitates the Government's assertions about the alleged return to normality in the peninsula or the degree of efficacy of relief supplies to the displaced population in the Vanni.**

3. We are amazed that the EU has accepted at face value the Sri Lankangovernment's self-proclaimed "commitment" to improve its human rights record. The mere establishment of the Human Right Commission means little. Evidently the EU Statement has ignored the March 1998 Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions (E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.2) in which the Rapporteur expressed deep concern about the "paralysis of State institutions" which effectively ensures "impunity" to the perpetrators of human rights violations (para 157). Moreover, "the systematic absence of investigations either civil or military into violations of the right to life facilitates impunity. Investigations are rarely conducted and when they are, they do not lead to the appropriate convictions or penalties" (para 120). The Raporteur added: "this culture of impunity has led to arbitrary killings and has contributed to the uncontrollable spiralling of violence" (para 119). In other words, the Government has deliberately applied State terror and provided protection to its death squads by using government-appointed human rights bodies as a cover and alibi for the violations of human rights of Tamils. It is naÔve in the extreme to believe that the "commitment" is anything more than lip service to international norms of democratic governance

4. We are particularly concerend that the EU Statement has used the word "illtreatment" rather than torture, apparently to downplay systematic torture and rape of detainees. Then it employed the word "killing" rather than massacres of Tamil civilians. Yet even newspapers in Colombo referred to the "killing" as "massacres"

5. Lastly, the Government's pro-

fesssed endeavour to reach a negotiated settlement cannot be taken seriously. Article 76 of the Constitution is the primary obstacle to a negotiated settlement. It specified that the "Parliament shall not abdicate or in any manner alienate its legislative power and shall not set up any authority with legislative power" (Art 76(1)). The devolution of power, which is the only viable basis for a negotiated settlement, has thus been made unconstitutional. Not surprisingly it is the long-standing demand of the Tamil people that the Article must be repealed if negotiations are to bear fruit. In fact, the Government explicitly admitted the necessity to repeal Article 76 (para IX) in its August 1995 President Kumratunga's Devolution Proposals. However, the Government has stubbornly reproduced Article 76 almost word for word as Article 92 of its October 1997 Draft Constitution: "Parliament shall not abdicate or in any manner alienate its legislative power and shall not set up any authority with any such legislative power (Art 92(1)). This is an unfortunate deception on the part of the Government

Clearly, the Government is neither willing nor able to reach a negotiated-settlement.

6. **The irresponsible Statement of the EU will embolden the Sri Lankangovernment to escalate its military adventure in the North-East Province (NEP), in the knowledge that the EU tacitly approves the Government's hypocritical "war for peace" strategy. The consequeces will be profound. There will be a massive escalation of human rights violations against the Tamil people. The humanitarian disaster will approach genocidal proportions. And there will be a fresh wave of refugees who will seek sanctury in foreign lands.**

7. We urgently call upon the member-countries of the EU and the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the Union, who have aligned themselves with the Statement read out by Ambassador Audrey Glover, to re-evaluate their position on Sri Lanka inorder to improve the chance of a just and lasting peace. ❑

Sarvodaya Ariyaratne's *bona fides* questioned

Parents of those who 'disappeared' in the Jaffna whilst in Sri Lankan army custody, accused A.T. Ariyaratne, a member of the Human Rights Commission, and founder of the NGO Sarvodaya, of also violating human rights, when he met them in Jaffna to convey that the Board of Investigation (BoI) appointed by Sri Lanka President to look into the disappearances had only listed 16 persons as having 'disappeared' during that time, said sources in Jaffna. The MPGA and international human rights organisations put the disappearances in Jaffna at around 600.

"Ariyaratne's statement diluted the horror of what had taken place in Jaffna"

Parents who had gathered at the office of the Missing Persons Guardian Association (MPGA) at Stanley Road in Jaffna town complained that Mr. Ariyaratne was violating the rights of the parents of the disappeared when he uttered such statements, despite knowing the truth about the disappearances in Jaffna.

The parents said they had met Sri Lanka President Chandrika Kumaratunga on January 16 this year and that she had acknowledged that large scale disappearances had taken place in Jaffna since the Sri Lankan army captured it.

But the BoI's report and Mr. Ariyaratne's statement diluted the horror of what had taken place in Jaffna since late 1996 said the parents.

The Chairman of the MPGA, S.Paramantham said that the BoI's statement left the parents in a dilemma as to what they should do in the future.

Sources in Jaffna said that Mr.Ariyaratne, despite being a member of the non-partisan Human Rights Commission, was seen travelling in vehicles of the Relief and Rehabilitation Authority of the North (RRAN), which is a Sri Lankan Government body.

Meanwhile, back in Colombo, Mr. Ariyaratne made it out in an interview to the Sri Lankan Government controlled Daily News that 500,000 citizens of Jaffna had placed their confidence in a sole individual- President Kumaratunga - to establish peace.

A T Ariyaratne, is used to a hostile reception. A few weeks ago, the Jaffna NGO Consortium reacted with scorn at his proposed visit to the peninsula, in his capacity as leader of Sarvodaya, which is the largest NGO in Sri Lanka.

Ariyaratne was once perceived as a rival of President Premadasa which allegedly led to the harassment of Sarvodaya by the Government of that time.

The Board of Investigation was appointed by the President to counter widespread domestic and international condemnation of the disappearances which occurred in Jaffna after it came under the control of the SLA.

However, the BoI, which was headed by a senior officer of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service (SLAS) and comprising four senior, serving members of the security forces and the police, was criticised because it was largely seen as tantamount to an attempt by a criminal to act as the judge in his own case. ❑

The plight of Tamil children in Sri Lanka

The government of Sri Lanka is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, yet, it blatantly contravenes the Convention articles with respect to Tamil children.

Making this charge at the 54th session of the Commission on Human Rights (March-April 1998) in Geneva, **Ms.Deidre McConnell** of the Tamil Centre for Human Rights, London, cited Article 38 of the Convention which sought to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts and ensure the protection and care of children which she said the government of Sri Lanka was continuing to defy.

In making an oral statement on behalf of Nord-Sud XX1 ,a non-governmental organisation, Ms.McConnell said:

"Children are regular victims of artillery shelling and aerial bombing of Tamil civilian areas in the North-Eastern Province (NEP). The attacks are unleashed by the armed forces indiscriminately, often blindly at night, to principally terrorise the civilian population. The child victims are either killed or maimed and/or orphaned. The attacks are the more recent variation, since the mid1980s, of a sustained strategy of collective punishment directed against Tamil civilians irrespective of gender or age.

The attacks have intensified after June 1990. Twenty five school going children were killed on the spot and many more injured when Sri Lanka Air Force Pucara Planes bombed the Nagarkoil Central School in the Jaffna peninsula in September 1995. Seven children under the age of 12, the youngest being 3 years of age, were massacred in Kumarapuram in February 1996 by the armed forces.

Amnesty International confirmed that three teenager were deliberately shot at close range by police and home guards in Thampalakamam in February 1998, in a particularly harrowing incident of military sadism took place in Kiran, Batticaloa. **In late March 1998, a six year old girl Peethamparam Sasikala was ordered to run and then shot in the back by security personnel.**

The psychological impact is not immediately obvious but nonetheless far-reaching.

The government imposed the embargo of food supplies to the NEP between 1985 and July 1987. During this period the government disingenuously claimed that the embargo was aimed at starving out the Liberation Tigers of Tarnil Eelam (LI I ~), that supplies of food essential to meet the needs of Tarnil civilians was being allowed through. However, the international community was not convinced then and the Sri Lankan government was condemned for implementing a policy of genocide against the Tarnil people.

The government re-imposed the same food embargo, while offering the same unconvincing rationalisation, in June 1990 and has maintained the embargo up to now without a break.

The embargo includes restrictions on the supply of infant foods and nutritional food supplements for children.

Starvation is common and malnutrition among children is rampant. In the Mullaitivu District out of a random sample of 16,767 children under 5, those who were normal were only 4,863. 6,371 children were found to be afflicted with third degree malnutrition, 3,186 children with second degree and 2,347 with first degree malnutrition. Children have developed night blindness.

School children at a pro
ombing of Nager

Existing health services are grossly insufficient. In the Mullaitivu District, for example, there are 11 midwives and one Public Health Inspector (PHI) for a population of over 200,000. According to the specifications of the Ministry of Health, there should be one midwife for every 2,500 people; but there is one midwife for about 19,000 people. The Ministry also specified that there should be one PHI for every 8,000 people.

Children weakened by malnutrition fall easy prey to Malaria, Typhoid and Scabies. There is an acute shortage of medicines needed to treat these diseases. The shortage is due to restricted supplies; and it is aggravated by the government supplying drugs close to or past their expiry date.

The supply of antibiotics is systematically restricted, which severely limits the scope for treating common infections among children. Consequently, infant mortality has risen sharply.

Artillery shelling and aerial bombing has destroyed about 20% of the schools. The armed forces occupy many of the remaining schools. As a result, thousands of Tamil children do not have access to minimum educational facilities. According to the Ministry of Education about 120,000 children are without access to any educational facilities.

NGO officials working on the ground estimate the number of children denied education to be much higher. For instance, it is estimated that some 14,000 children between year 2 and year 5 in the Jaffna peninsula are not being sent to school because parents fear for their safety.

Consequently, the education of tbe vast majority of Tamil children has been massively disrupted, as evidenced by their declining performance at examinations. Despite the dismantling of its administration in the Jaffna peninsula, the LTTE has, within its limited resources, continued to discharge its social responsibilities. The organisation has provided educational facilities for female and male children, who have lost their parents in the war, at Chencholai and Kantharuban Arivuchcholai childrens' homes respectively.

At the check-points manned by the Sri Lankan armed forces in the NEP children have been arbitrarily arrested and many of them have disappeared. Arrested girl-children have been gang raped by the Sri Lankan security forces. The gang rape of Krishanthy Kumaraswamy in September 1996 is well known. She was arrested at the Chemmanai check-point on her way back from school, raped and murdered. **Another case in point is the rape of Thenuka Selvaraja, a ten-year-old child.**

Rape is routinely used as a weapon of war by the Sri Lankan security forces against Tamil females - both children and women - to systematically terrorise and dehumanise them. Tamil children in refugee camps, which are virtual concentration camps, are most vulnerable to sexual abuse, particularly at the hands of the Sri Lankan security personnel who run the camps.

The Sri Lankan government has turned a blind eye to the sexual exploitation of Sinhalese children in the South by sex tourists. Some concern is being expressed in official circles about the activity of paedophiles. However, it is a token gesture. **The government has for many years been aware of the sexual exploitation of children; but it has continued to sacrifice the Sinhalese children to earn hard currency, which is desperately needed to finance the war against the Tamil people - including Tamil children.**

We urge the Human Rights Commission to condemn the Sri Lankan government's violation of the rights of Tamil children in respect to Health, Education, and Right to Life itself. We recommend the appointment of a country rapporteur to investigate and report on the situation." Ms. McConnell said. ❑

WAR AND PEACE, SRI LANKA STYLE

By: K. Kanavathipillai

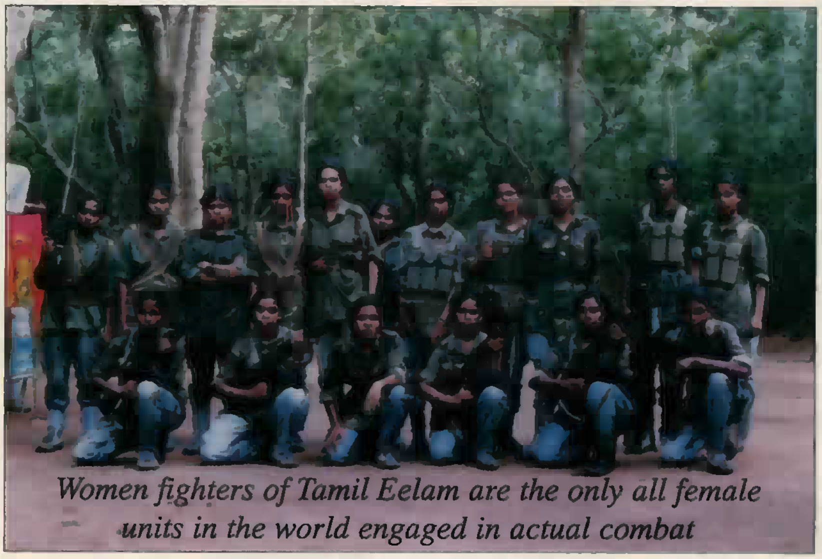
(K. Kanavathipillai is a former Asst. Under - Secretary of the IBRD)

To say that Sri Lanka is passing through a painful stability crisis of an unprecedented size and nature is to call attention to the obvious. The crisis is made up of political, economic and military components. Above all there is a quantum leap in corruption at the highest levels of government. The Finance ministry especially is the acknowledged leader in corrupt deals.

The country has earned justifiable epithets like 'sick man of South Asia' and 'mistake of South East Asia'. Last year in Malaysia president Chandrika lied to the world that the island's economic growth is at 5.5 percent but the truth is, it is less than 3.5 percent and fast spiralling downwards. In the same speech she said that the ethnic problem is at its finishing stages. Obviously she is long on rhetoric but quite short in veracity.

The biggest hoax of them all is her so-called devolution package which is as non-existent as the 'emperor's new clothes'. To use an analogy once freely used in apartheid South Africa what Chandrika has in mind are 'Bantustants' - powerless Tamil Cantons separated and isolated by Sinhala settlements with the Sinhala military playing a protective role. Her war for peace has only this in view.

Take for instance Manal Aru, populated by the Tamils from time immemorial now dubbed Welioya and made into a new administrative district by the Chandrika government. Colombo's Tamil politicians who need the government's support for their survival have given their approval. They have also agreed to the declaration of Amparai as an exclusive Sinhala area.



Women fighters of Tamil Eelam are the only all female units in the world engaged in actual combat

The newly created district is located in between the north - east provinces. Portions of land from Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Anuradhapura go for its making. The border areas of this new district are Nedunkerni in the north - west, Padaviya in the south - west, Kokkilai in the north - east and Thennamaravady in the south - east. This district will have the Mullaitivu sea on its eastern border and is over 1000 sq kms in area.

This district was expressly formed for the purpose of splitting the territorial contiguity of the north - east. The Jayawardene government employed the armed forces to drive out 13 208 families from 42 Tamil villages of the Manal Aru region. 18 other villages in the Nedunkerni are now being cleared preparatory to settling Sinhala colonists in this Tamil area. As recently as March 1998 the Tamil inhabitants of two villages of the Trincomalee district have been driven out to make way for Sinhala colonists.

In 1984 Minister of National Security; Lalith Athulathmudali whom J.N. Dixit describes as a latter day Bismarck and also one of the most virulent enemies of the Tamil people, devised a three pronged strategy to keep the Tamils in bondage.

01. Declaration of a maritime security zone around the island and the denial of fishing rights to the Tamils of the northeast.

02. Bringing the Vavuniya - Jaffna highway under Sinhala army control, 150 metres on either side of this road to be cleared and made a security zone. The use of this highway by Tamils subjected to military authority.

03. The demarcation of the Weli Oya region, in Manal Aru and the settlement of armed Sinhala colonists with additional army protection.

On 22 February 1998 Brigadier

Hiran Halangoda, the Weli Oya brigade commander declared that Weli Oya is important militarily. He said, 'our presence will not allow the north east merger. The LTTE can't win Eelam as long as we stay there'. He emphasised in this address to the press that the Weli Oya military and settlement complex is of the utmost importance in the ongoing effort to crush the Eelam struggle.

The Jeya Sikurui operation dovetails nicely with the overall objective of keeping the Tamils in their place Lt.Gen.Daluwatte, the Sinhala army chief pointed out a few weeks ago that the military operation he is directing is three - tiered:-

(1) Capture of the Jaffna peninsula and keeping it under military control.

(2) Securing the Vavuniya - Jaffna highway and making it an exclusive military domain.

(3) Making military inroads into the interior of the Vanni jungles and annihilating the LTTE with superior force.

This is actually a replay of the Athulathmudali programme.

Therefore securing the highway is not an end in itself. The implications are that the military operations are likely to continue far into the next millennium. At the moment however the Sinhala forces are stuck in Mankulam.

Mankulam town occupies a land mass of six square kilometres. The troops started their move from Vavuniya on 13th May 1997 and have crossed 45 Kms out of the 76 kms long Vavuniya - Kilinochchi highway. It is now an admitted fact, Kilinochchi is under LTTE control. The forces must now take Kilinochchi before making the trip to Jaffna. Considering the time taken and the military losses incurred it is operation Barbarosa for the Sinhala military.

Meanwhile Jaffna is proving to be Sri Lanka's little Vietnam, a quagmire where a few hundred LTTE fighters have seized the initiative in a war of attrition against thousands of Sinhala troops all of whom are sitting ducks.

As usual the forces are now turning their wrath on the civilians. Israel with American approval has supplied three highly potent weapons - Kfir bombers (a basterdized version of the French Mirage), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV, the spy in the sky) and smart bombs. Civilian concentrations are spotted by the UVA which are immediately bombed by the Kfir warplanes. The smart bombs explode at a particular height from the ground scattering destruction all round.

On March 26, 1998 at 8.00 am two Kfirs and a UVA appeared simultaneously over Vattakachchi in the Kilinochchi district. Guided by the UVA the Kfirs dropped a series of bombs on the habitations killing 8 and maiming 5 others. Two stone built houses were demolished. 80 coconut trees were uprooted and a paddy store was burnt down. The massacre of Tamils continues so does international hypocrisy.

May be we are not feeling the full weight of the American military might but certainly we are made to bear the brunt of her ample nudge exerted through her intermediary, Israel. American Green Beret commandos and navy seals are in the island giving a hand to the Sinhala military.

During his visit to Africa President Clinton expressed regret for past sins in US relations with Africa, including cold war support for repressive regimes. Some years hence his successors may make similar noises regarding the Tamils.

Appaling Human Rights violations continue in all parts of the Island. The incarceration of Tamils goes on with frenzy. Even well meaning Sinhalese believe that the arrest and torture of Tamils is necessary for the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Island.

The Krishanti rape and murder case has a new twist. The first and fifth accused have escaped from the court premises with the connivance of sinhala prison officials. The accused in the Thampalakamam massacre of 8 Tamil civilians (the culprits are all policemen) too have escaped in a similar manner.

The sexual harassment of women in the occupied areas is going apace. In the last week of March 98 a deaf and dumb woman of 28 was raped by a gang of 4 Sinhala soldiers in Chavakachcheri. The mother of the victim made a complaint to the Jaffna commander, Lionel Balagala. He had refused to take action.

Female participation in the LTTE war against the Sinhala invader is now full and meaningful. The women fighters of Tamil Eelam are the only units in the world who are engaged in actual combat. They are proving to be as competent and hardy as their male counterparts.

Colombo's English language Sunday newspapers whose forte is Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism are now asking as to what factors go to make a Black Tiger. The answer is not far to seek. Any young Tamil who has witnessed the carnage wrought by the Sinhala thugs who pass off as soldiers, sailors and airmen will become a Black Tiger.

Take what happened on September 9, 1990 in Sathurukondan a Tamil village, 5 kms off Batticaloa town. A 30 feet wide 30 feet deep pit was filled with freshly slain bodies of innocent Tamils villagers. Petrol was poured and the bodies set ablaze. Tamil women were raped in this light and were later cut to pieces and thrown on the fire. After the flames had died down the pit was levelled with a bulldozer. The army and police personnel who took part in this barbarous act then shouted 'Jayawewa' meaning victory in Sinhala. The young man who lay hidden and witnessed the gory scene is still alive.

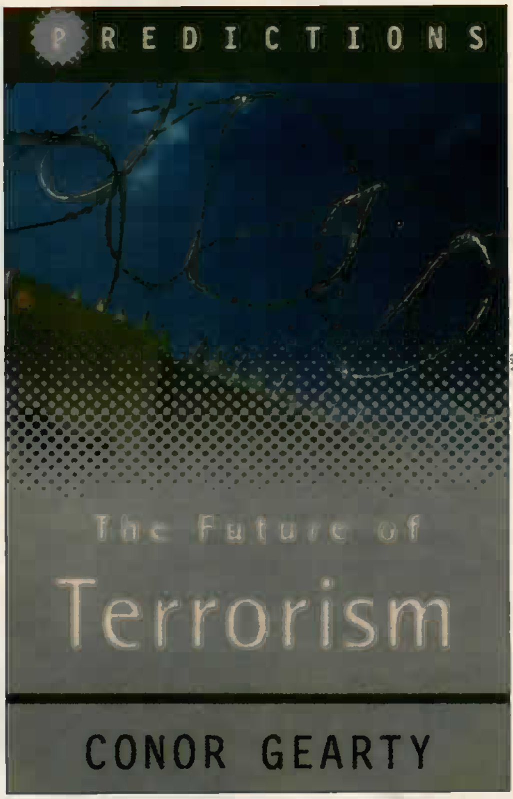
The aerial bombing of civilians is Athulathmuthali's contribution to the ethnic war. He pioneered the bombing of schools, houses, private dwellings, playing grounds, market places, public buildings and Hindu temples when crowds were present. This practice is followed up to date. In all 1800 Hindu places of worship had been demolished in the northeast both by artillery shells and bombs dropped from the air.

State terrorism has reached epic levels in Chandrika's regime. After her accession to power the Tamils have suffered some of the worst loss of lives. The bombing of St. Peter's Church Navaly caused 224 deaths. The bombing of the Nagarkoil Tamil school killed 40 school children. The aerial attack on Nachchikuda fishing village took away 16 lives. The Sinhala army massacred 23 civilians in Kumarapuram. 759 civilians have disappeared after arrest by the Sinhala military immediately after the conquest of Jaffna. There are many more to come.

Her armed forces reached the Everest of savagery soon after entering Jaffna. They dug up the martyrs burial grounds of Kopay and Kodikamam and desecrated the sanctity of these hallowed grounds. This act shall neither be forgotten nor forgiven.

Nothing shall dampen the white hot anger. Every LTTE fighter is a protective missile of the homeland and its people. Remember, more then 50,000 Tamil men, women and children have been killed by the Sinhala armed forces within the last 14-15 years of our freedom struggle. ❑

The United States and the jargon of Terrorism



"It has been the United States that has been most prolific in its use of the jargon of terrorism in international relations, but it is that country which has also been loosest in its application of any coherent definition to the term. Distinctions between international, state-sponsored, transnational and purely domestic terrorism have come and gone as the US has sometimes condemned subversive violence and sometimes applauded it. At times, such as with the ANC and its neighbouring Namibian liberation movement SWAPO, it has seemed as though the US has been prepared to castigate as terrorist any challenge to any status quo, no matter how mild and popular the subversion or how dreadful or illegal the regime from which power has been sought to be wrested. On other occasions however, the US has given the impression of being almost anarchic in its support for rebellious factions, most notably with UNITA in Angola, the Contras in Nicaragua and the antigovernment forces in Soviet backed Afghanistan in the 1980s. While occasional efforts have been made to distinguish international from other forms of "terrorism", it has been neither a desire for linguistic clarity nor squeamishness about violence that has been the driving force behind US policy on terrorism.

"From the start of the Reagan presidency in 1981, the supposed problem of terrorism has been effectively harnessed as a branch of US foreign policy, with the condemnatory label being deployed to hurt the enemies of US interests while being withheld from US friends and client states, no matter how opprobrious their conduct might otherwise be ".

- CONOR GEARTY, Professor of Law at King's College, London, in the short book, The Future of TERRORISM, one of a series of 24 short books in which some of the world's most distinguished academics and writers in their particula fields attempt to forecast the future, over the next 50 years, across a range of social, economic, political, geographical and technological subject areas. (Phoenix paperbacks, London).

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U.N.'s Otunnu meets LTTE leaders in Tamil Eelam

The following is the Press release issued by Mr.Olara A. Otunnu, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The release, dated 8th May, was issued at Vavuniya:

Mr.Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, is on an official visit to Sri Lanka to witness and assess for himself the multiple ways in which children are affected by the protracted armed conflict in that country. Mr.Omunu's mandate is to promote the rights, protection and welfare of all children affected by armed conflict.

Mr.Otunnu is currently visiting the Vanni region, one of the most conflict-affected areas of Sri Lanka. Having met with the civilian and military authorities in the northern town of Vavuniya, Mr.Otunnu proceeded to the LTTE-held areas where he saw for himself the conditions of internally-displaced communities and heard first-hand accounts of their plight. Mr.Otunnu also held discussions with local government authorities the Bishop of Mannar, and representatives of local and international organizations about the humanitarian situation in the region, particularly as it affects women and children.

In the context of his humanitarian mission, Mr.Otunnu met with two senior representatives appointed by Mr.V.Prabhakaran, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), namely Mr.Thamilselvan, head of the political section, and Mr.Anton Balasingham, political advisor. Mr.Otunnu raised with the LTTE leadership several issues concerning the protection, rights and welfare of children affected by the ongoing conflict.

Following the discussions with Mr.Otunnu, the LTTE leadership made a number of commitments. They include the following:

Olara Otunnu

1. Participation and recruitment of children. The LTTE leadership, as of today, undertook not to use children below the age of 18 years in combat. They further undertook not to recruit children below the age of 17 years. The LTTE leadership agreed that a framework to monitor tnese commitments should be put in place.

Freedom of movement for displaced populations

The LTTE leadership made the commitment that the movement of displaced populations who want to return to areas now under government control would not be impeded. The LTTE leadership also gave the commitment that there would be no impediment to the return to their homes of Muslim populations. The LTTE leadership accepted that a framework to monitor these processes should be put in place.

Distribution of humanitarian supplies

The LTTE leadership made a commitment not to interfere in the distribution of humanitarian supplies destined for affected civilian populations The LTTE leadership accepted that a framework to monitor this commitment should be put in place.

4. Observing the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mr.Otunnu stressed the importance of all parties, including non-state sectors, to observe the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In particular, Mr.Otunnu urged the LTTE leadership to make a public commitment to respect the principles and provisions of the Convention. In this connection, the LTTE leadership indicated its readiness to have its cadres receive information and instruction on the provisions of this Convention

5. Targetting civilians

Mr.Otunnu expressed the gravest concern about the continuing targetting of civilian populations and sites throughout the country. The LTTE leadership acknowledged this to be an important and legitimate concern and undertook to review its strategies and tactics in this regard.

Who is Otunu ?

An Ugandan born, he has held many leadership responsibilities, including President of the United Nations Security Council, Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda, and Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations.

Born in 1950, and as a student leader in the 1970s, he played a leading role in the resistance against the Idi Amin regime in Uganda. An Overseas Scholar at Oxford University and Fullbright Scholar at Harvard Law School, he is a lawyer by training.

No.3 in the series of interviews given by LTTE leader **Velupillai Prabhakaran** *to the media.*

N. Ram *interviews* Prabhakaran

" How can we be peaceful before a ruthless enemy? "

Flashback 1986 !

N.Ram, who was co-editor of THE HINDU in 1986 interviewed the LTTE leader in that year. The interview was published in two parts in the newspaper on the 4th and 5th September. After the failure of the Rajiv Gandhi-Jayawardene agreement of July 29, 1987, and the failure of the I.P.K.F military intervention in Sri Lanka, Mr.Ram has since then become hostile towards the LTTE. He is editor of FRONTLINE now.

HOT SPRING presents here the first part of the interview.

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N.Ram: *Mr. Prabakaran, how do you characterise the situation on the ground in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, in terms of military activity and in terms of the problems people face? What is the nature of the crisis?*

V.Prabakaran: Our land is a militarily occupied, besieged territory. When you look at our territory, big military camps have been set up even in small areas. (To his aides: let's use the map now, that's important). There are certain specific areas where there is a big military concentration. Even today the army shot dead five defenceless Tamil civilians in Batticaloa district. It's a situation where civilians cannot be up and about in safety. The people there live in fear of being gunned down by the troops at any time as they move about on the streets.

Q: *Reports based on visits by foreign correspondents and other observers to the Tamil areas make the point that the LTTE is extremely powerful in the North, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula... and that you virtually run the administration there. Would that be an exaggeration?*

A: There is a certain amount of truth in this. We can describe the Jaffna peninsula as being under our comprehensive control. In addition, Mannar and Killinochchi districts can be said, to a certain extent, to be turning into our secure areas. We are also increasing our activity and strengthening ourselves in the East in Trincomalee, Mutur, Batticaloa, Amparai...

Q: *Now, broadly speaking, how would you describe the position and influence of the other militant organisations? How do they stand in relation to your activity in the Tamil areas? And, on the other hand, in relation to the army?*

No semblance of civil society

As for the army, there are no signs or trappings of civil administration there. This is the condition that has evolved. There is not even a semblance of civil society. People can't live peacefully in their homes. At any moment, their houses could come under attack, at any moment the army could surround their village and shoot them down. No genuine enquiry is ordered into such incidents. So long as there is no enquiry into atrocities, we can't describe the administration as normal, can we? As far as the (militant) organisations are concerned, even as we are waging an armed struggle in this larger territory, the other organisations are waging a fight in particular small areas. In general, what is the situation of the (militant) organisations? They function as a military wing to protect the people, as people's self-defence armed contingents. The state's army functions there as a racist, destructive military force; we carry on as a national people's army for the liberation of the Tamil people. One important point here. This situation prevails in the Eastern province of the army directly going on a rampage against the people and the (militant) organisations fighting to protect the people. As for the North, and especially in the Jaffna peninsula, we can claim to have fully stopped their military activities of this type. They are unable to break out. They are confined to their camps and, using small artillery and also aircraft to bomb from the air, they hit at innocent civilians. But they are unable to come out and carry on their atrocities against the people in a direct fashion. In the Northern province, the army has been bottled up and kept under our control.

Supplies choked

Q: *How would you characterise the morale of the Sri Lankan armed forces and their approach to the whole question? If they are an army of occupation and if in the North they are bottled up, how would you characterise their mental state?*

A: If you look at the reality, they are in an agitated, disturbed state of mind. In certain places, the army commanders have sent us messages through the citizens' committees. In places such as Thondamanaru, they have requested us not to obstruct their water supply. Likewise, in Jaffna our organisers and they have communicated over the wireless. Our organisers asked them: What is it that you want?' The army officials said; 'We want two lorry loads of firewood plus some mangoes", They have been affected to that extent, on account of the choking of supplies. our people allowed them one lorry load of firewood...

Q: *And mangoes?*

A: (Laughs) In reality, the army is in a difficult situation there. Since the supply of essential commodities has been controlled, they are attempting to reach some kind of understanding with us on this matter.

Q: *In May, there was a major military offensive in the course of which the armed forces came out in the North and the Sri Lankan state resorted to the extreme step of bombing its own people in Jaffna. what, in your opinion, came of it? Did it succeed in intimidating the people? Did it convey any message to you? Or do you consider it, in military terms, a disastrous adventure?*

Vijaya Kumaratunga
Bombs hurled at him

A: It appeared to be an operation designed to weaken us it took place before an intended new round of talks- and then to approach us for talks.

Q: *It was soon after the Chidambaram mission to Colombo...*

A: Yes, What was important was the strategy: the troops were simultaneously to issue out of the Elephant Pass and the military camps that we had placed under siege. the calculation was that we would be trapped as the army advanced en mass from several directions. The Government reasoned that as the army advanced from all sides, we could not cope with this and would not be able to fight it in several places; and we would be forced to withdraw from some areas. In other words, they would force an advance. They would move forward in some areas. In other words, they would force a change in a situation where they could not advance. They would move forward some way, estabilish a few camps in those areas, establish supply lines between these camps and the existing ones, and thus keep moving up. There was another element in the plan. Even as they launched this offensive by land, they would attack from the sea and, using landing craft, would land troops in our territory. (We have video footage of this episode). Simultaneously, there would be aerial bombardment They conducted it as a combined operation involving the three components of the armed forces.

All-out fight

However, to an extent, we came to know of this plan beforehand. We knew of the fresh deployment of weapons, the additional preparations and military movements, including in the sea. We understood that they were going to launch a major offensive. We mobilised accordingly. We armed and prepared ourselves more or less for a civil war. We prepared the people for this crisis. We taught them how to dig trenches for protecting themselves against aerial bombing and also other measures of civil defence. We were determined to demonstrate our resistance, our fight in an all-out, foolhardy way. Whatever be the number of fighters we lost, we would not give in-that was our decision. That is why our comrades engaged fiercely with the troops on all sides. Nobody retreated anywhere in the face of this offensive. The result was that we lost nine fighters during this campaign. Significantly, as we attacked concertedly even as they tried to break out of their fortified camps, they scattered. When the soldiers came out of the Kilinochchi camp, we attacked them at a place called Pallai. They tried to bring in reinforcements from Elephant Pass, but we cut them off. What was notable was the enthusiastic attitude and state of mind of our people. Seeing our determined resistance and counterattacks, the people increased their support to us during this period.

Q: *It appears that this brought about virtually a qualitative change so far as the LTTE was concerned, in that you capability was demonstrated and your image certainly received a boost...*

A: Yes, the experience left a deep impact on the people. The LTTE-TELO clashes had just ended. As we had fought TELO and wiped it out, the Sri Lankan government thought we had been exhausted and weakened. It stepped up its effort against us. In that kind of situation, since were able to repulse the army and emerge victorious, the people's confidence in us as the organisation involved most determinedly in the fight for their liberation, deepened. After that experience, we have received more support than before from our people.

Q: *Can you foresee in broad terms what the Sri Lankan Government's strategy might be? What will be its attitude and behaviour over the next four to six weeks, considering that substantive talks have been conducted in Colombo and there is a feeling that things are moving politically?*

A new offensive?

A: Even as the talks began (between the TULF and the Sri Lankan Government in July), we received information suggesting that the armed forces were preparing for a renewal of the earlier offensive. We learnt that arms from Pakistan had arrived secretly for the Sri Lankan soldiers trained in Pakistan. Besides, we gathered that some foreign military advisers had been brought in. Gunboats from China had also arrived. What we assume or deduce is that in order to hide their defeat in the last offensive, they may with the help of foreign military advisors launch a massive offensive against us in the near future. The evidence is not yet definitive, but this is our assumption.

Q: *If we could now turn to the Colombo talks and the talking process... What is your assessment of the negotiations between the TULF and the Sri Lankan Government? What do you think will be its likely outcome?*

> *....arms from Pakistan arrive secretly ... gunboats from China, foreign military advisers... the government was preparing for a massive offensive"*

A: Our view is that the talks have not acquired a proper shape. From the available information, we learn that even among those who went for the talks, no clear, definite position has emerged. It does not appear that a concrete framework has taken shape. our assessment is that their effort is still to search for a framework.

Q: *According to a newspaper report, a reference was made by one of the TULF leaders to the difficulty of trying to find a black cat in a dark room...*

A: They, should be asked that question. That don't have an outline. When you refer to "homeland", what is our homeland? what must one talk about? About provinces and provincial councils? Or do we contemplate powers for ourselves above that level? They don't seem to have any plan on these matters.

Q: *Earlier, you had discussions with the TULF relating to the negotiating process. You were reported to have assured the Government of India that you would not do anything to scuttle the process. What has happened to change this situation.*

A: It was the good intention of not wanting to be an obstacle to the talks promoted by India that made us avoid expressing any opinion on the TULF going into the talks. At the same time, the TULF leaders came and briefed us on what had gone on in the talks(in the first round), then went to Delhi for consultations but upon their return went to Colombo without any deliberation with us. While talking to us, they had made it clear that they could not come to any concrete conclusion. As a result of these consultations between the TULF and the LTTE, confusion arose in the minds of our people. The doubt was whether we were privy to these talks conducted by the TULF. In a situation where they were talking(to the Sri Lankan Government) in an unplanned way, we were obliged to remove the confusion in the minds of our people by making public the relationship between the TULF and the LTTE and by exposing the TULF in the popular arena. We were put in a situation of having to expose before our people the role the TULF was playing in these talks.

Q: *Generally, at a political level in India and perhaps abroad also, there is the expectation that the militant ogranisations will be involved in the negotiating process as a follow-up to the Colombo talks. We believe that the Indian External Affairs Minister, Mr.Shiv Shanker, has asked you to give the "process" a chance. But the "content" or outcome will be put to you and you are free to accept or reject it. What is likely to be the follow-up and, specifically, your response.*

A: In the main, the LTTE is of the view that we must, in conjunction with other(militant) organisations, forge a common view or consensus on what further action could be taken in this matter. But there is a problem. From what one gathers from newspaper reports, those who went to talk are in a confused state. They have not really discussed anything of consequence. They have not reached any kind of conclusion on issues like land or any of the other important maters. Does it not appear meaningless then? Those who went to talk could not come to any specific conclusion and remain quite confused...

Q: *We learn that earlier, and per-*

haps even now, you let the Government of India understand that you were not afraid to talk, that in principle you were not opposed to talking on these issues, provided the Government of India was involved in a substantive way. Would that be correct?

"Fundamental question"

A: At the time of Thimpu, we said that, yes. But we wish to emphasise another point also. The important thing is not that the Indian Government emphasises to us the need for talks in anticipation of what Mr.Jayewardene will offer us! There must be a reasonable situation. Mr.Jayewardene must be brought round to talking on the basis of what the Tamil people need essentially. Let me be concrete. As far as I am aware, the issue of the North and East is a fundamental question. If he (Mr.Jayewardene) rules that issue out of the agenda and invites the TULF to talk, then can you describe such talks Mr.Jayewardene "has in mind" for us and "is willing" to offer us. The Indian Government must attempt to find a basis acceptable to both sides. Our view is that only that would be purposeful.

You see, I have discussed this with you before. On certain matters, it would be helpful if the Government of India came out openly... came to a clear determination. For example, they (the TULF leaders) have not come to a conclusion even on land. Even on law and order, there is controversy or discord ... Or you may put it this way. Mr.Jayewardene is trying to take us to a corner and, holding a paltry package in his hand, pull a fast one over all of us. Mr.Jayewardene does not appear to be engaged in serious talks on the Tamil question.

Q: *If we look at the whole process of talks after the anti-Tamil pogrom of July-August 1983, various things have happened. On the one hand, all the Tamil organisations remain at least formally committed to Eelam.*

On the other hand, the Indian Government has pursued certain directions, For example, Annexure C-substantial devolution of power, autonomy to provincial councils(which would be called "regional councils") and so on. There has also been talk generally, but not in this forum, about a federal solution. The TULF actually put forward a federal alternative in December '85. On the other side, the Sri Lankan government insisted on offering much less in the All Party Conference of 1984 and even subsequently despite the rejection of this offer. There has been a lot of swinging back and forth on these issues. Do you take the commitment to Eelam as a serious political proposition for the Tamil side-not just speaking for youself or the LTTE? Or is it a bargaining position, meaning you won't give this up until an alternative-a lesser political proposition-would come on the agenda? Do you seriously believe that the struggle for Tamil Eelam can be waged on a political front under the present circumstances and seeing the position taken by India?

> *"In Jaffna, our organisers and they (Sri Lankan armed forces) communicated over the wireless.Our organisers asked them : What is that you want ? The army officials said: "We want two lorry loads of firewood plus some mangoes ...."*

"Backward-looking mode"

A: Certainly. If you look at our historical back ground, our experience of struggle over 30 years or so has brought us in-escapably to this determination. Therefore we consider that only Tamil Eelam can be a secure outcome for us and there can be no alternative to this. The demands have evolved in stages. In 1961, our people in their struggle for a federal set-up conducted a satyagraha that brought the administration to a standstill. In 1961 itself, the demand for a federal solution was sharp and intense. What is taking place today seems(laughs ironically)....a backward-looking process. It is below the level of the content reached in the Banda-Chelva Pact of 1957! It is below the level of a federal solution. We are talking today of the province, the provincial council. If you look at it critically, so far as Mr.Jayewardene is concerned he has approached it in a backward-looking mode... he has begun the talks placing such aspects on offer. In 1961 there was much enthusiasm among the Tamil people for a federal solution to their problem. After that there was a prolonged experience for us of losses and hardships and crises, of our leaders placing faith time and again in racist Sinhala politicians and being cheated in the bargain.

Look at the recent experience involving the positions of Mr.Jayewardene and Mrs.Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Even as the talks are confined to the framework of the provincial council, she is demonstrating her opposition to the proposal. Those who have supported the Tamils to an extent, those like Mr.Vijay Kumarantunga, have bombs hurled at them on the podium. So long as a racist, chauvinistic context prevails there, we are left with no alternative but to seek to establish our own state in our traditional homeland. If an alternative to this can be pointed out either by Mr.Jayewardene or by the Government of India, then we will put it before our people; and only if our people approve it can we consider changing our stand even to an extent. But thus far, nothing has happened to make us think along those lines.

What have we witnessed recently? Only racist and chauvinistic opposition. Racism and chauvinism have forged ahead of politics there! And the pattern is this: when it looks as if a political solution might emerge, racist upheavals occur. This has been our experience from 1958. ❑

To be continued in the next issue

Suresh case: Continuation of Karen Parker's testimony

"Tamils have the right to take up arms"

(Continued from previous issues of Hot Spring)

Q. When did the British arrive in Sri Lanka?

A. *It was in the eighteen...well, there had been some Dutch earlier than that, but you could say that the British colonial period probably began the end of the 1700's into the early 1800's. The first...about eighteen...I think the Cleghorn Minute was about the 1830's or forties. He was one of the early administrators in the British East Indies, in that area. Even he mentions that, that there have been for thousands of years two distinct countries, two distinct kingdoms, two languages, two people, essentially different religions, different languages, et cetera. And throughout that period, although there was unitary rule under the British, the British actually did not attempt to dismantle the separate cultures and the Tamil culture kind of continued as Tamil culture; the Sinhala culture' continued as Sinhala culture with some difficulty, but it wasn't an attempt by the British to obliterate either one, either of the two, in my understanding.*

Karen Parker

In the Federal Court of Canada :
The Manickavasagam Suresh
inquiry held before Mr. Justice
Teitelbaum
March 21 1996.

In 1948, there was the promise of a nonTamil, non-Sinhala unified post-colonial state.

HIS LORDSHIP: In what year, ma'am?

THE WITNESS: *1948 was the first constitution in Sri Lanka.*

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. So, that is when the British withdrew, in '48?

A. *The British were withdrawing and the promise was that there would be a...it would not be an ethnic state, it would be Ceylon, a subsequent name change to Sri Lanka, but that it would be neither Sinhala nor Tamil.*

Q. But, before we move on to post-British history, so then in terms of your analysis of why the Tamils qualify as a people, the history...

A. *Pre-colonial, very clear, very, very clear. Separate kingdom, separate language, separate everything.*

Q. So, based upon the criteria, is there any doubt that...are the people that doubt...I mean aside from perhaps from the government of Sri Lanka itself and other international experts...is there general consensus that the Tamils are a people and have a right to self-determination?

A. *Most of the scholars agree with me; some governments do not. In my view, their views are politically motivated and have no bearing on the history and the fact and application of the law, but...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Surely, madam, some scholars have political views as well? Are you saying to me that scholars...

THE WITNESS: *Do you mean non-Sinhala or non-Tamil scholars on the concept of self determination?*

HIS LORDSHIP: Yes

THE WITNESS: *There may be some. I have not read...*

HIS LORDSHIP: All right, thank you.

THE WITNESS: . . . *any material specifically denying it to the Tamils. I have read, however, many of the works on self-determination discuss it in terms of the Tamils*

HIS LORDSHIP: I am not saying I disagree with what you are saying, other than when you make the blanket statement, "All scholars don't have political views with regard to these matters."

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. Now, in terms of the test then of a specific territory, if there is such an identifiable territory, which parts of Sri Lanka?

A. *I think you can go by what Cleghorn said, he said the north and the east and it was very early in the early colonial map exactly where it was.*

Q. So, based upon this analysis, at what point does a...once you have a right to self-determination, as you told us that means you have the right to elect your government and whether you remain within, at what point do a people who have a right to self-determination have the right to engage in armed resistance or armed...or take up arms in order to achieve the objective. I mean, in your understanding and in general?

A. *In my understanding, it would be in spite of attempts to vindicate the right of selfdetermination, the right is not granted and instead oppression or acts against the principle of self-determination. Self-determination is also a jus cogens norm, it is a pre-emptory norm in international law. It is not just that it is Article I in both of the covenants; it is viewed by scholars and the U.N. rapporteurs as jus cogens.*

So, it is pre-emptory. In other words, if a people have the right to self-determination, they should be granted it. In the absence of such a grant, then the United Nations allows the use of force to vindicate the right.

"No effective Tamil representation in Parliament when a large percentage of the Tamil population is living in refugee camps and is scattered in the jungle....."

Q. In Sri Lanka, based upon your understanding of the history, would you say that the Tamil minority had the right to take up arms as a result of

A. *I wouldn't say Tamil minority as . . .*

Q. Tamil I am sorry, that was . . .

A. *The Tamil people.*

HIS LORDSHIP: No, I . . .

THE WITNESS: *They are a minority in number, numerically*

HIS LORDSHIP: I think that is all that Mr. Waldman meant.

THE WITNESS: *SO, we will use it small "m" minority.*

HIS LORDSHIP: That is all that he meant.

MR. WALDMAN: The Tamil people. I think I . . .

HIS LORDSHIP: The Tamil people who are a minority today in Sri Lanka if we use the whole as a country. That is all that was meant.

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. The Tamil people who are the minority, in your view, do they have the right to take up arms?

A. *In my view, they do.*

Q. Could you give me your understanding of some of the historical basis for why you believe that they reached a point where they had the right to take up arms, I mean, citing some of the incidents in history?

A. *I am going to add another element in this discussion, but I do think it is relevant. There is occasionally talk of extinguishment of the right to self-determination if it looks as if a people in the decolonization process made a voluntary choice to incorporate with perhaps another group. There was argument that the 1948 constitutional agreements in Sri Lanka constituted such an agreement; therefore, the historical right to self-determination as a product of the decolonizasion process was extinguished.*

If that theory is persuasive and I think there is a certain persuasion to it, though I am not completely persuaded, if that theory is persuasive, then to reinvoke the principle of self-determination, one looks to whether or not that agreement is being met in spirit and letter, and if it is not being met the degree to which the affected party, in this case the Tamils, are oppressed and not granted an opportunity to realize full human rights.

If one looks at the history of Sri Lanka in the post-colonial period, what you see is an agreement to give it a try, together, without one or the other side dominating the political process. You then see an almost instant violation of that agreement on the Sinhala side by beginning the introduction of, what you might call for want of a better word, Sinhala-only type moves.

Q. So, the 1948 Constitution, in your view, was an attempt to try to find a peaceful cohabitation of the two people?

A. *Yes.*

Q. So, what...

A. *And almost from the time the ink was dry, again to fail and unravel. And in the fifties there was a process of rather serious unravelling.*

Q. Could you give us some of the examples of either pieces of legislation or incidents that brought about the, "unravelling" of this agreement?

A. *Well, the disenfranchisement of the plantation Tamils, Sinhala-only language, making Buddhism the national religion, sort of gearing so that Sri Lanka was viewed culturally Sinhala, and that is so pervasive even to this day that when the wife of the president of my country visited Sri Lanka she presented Sri Lanka, and this was in the press and their own statement of Sri Lanka as being a peaceloving Buddhist country, and when the Ambassador to Sri Lanka presented his credentials to the Clinton administration, he made reference to Sri Lanka being a peace-loving Buddhist country. Well, Sri Lanka is not Buddhist; the Sinhala people are Buddhist and it is that tone, that attempt to describe Sri Lanka and create Sri Lanka as a Sinhala country was what the struggle was in the fifties. Actually, by the end of the forties it had already started, but through the fifties, into the sixties, that in a sense led to the formation of military units to defend the Tamils against that.*

> *" . . . when the Ambassador to Sri Lanka presented his credentials to the Clinton administration, he made reference to Sri Lanka being a peace - loving Buddhist country. Well, Sri Lanka is not Buddhist; the Sinhala people are Buddhist . . ."*

Now, in the course of the dialogue, the dialogues would get more and more heated and political leaders would resign in protest and, you know, it was an extremely turbulent period in history. There were many pacts and many pacts broken between Tamil leadership and Sinhala leadership at the time. The Senanayake pact...I am afraid the spelling is going to defy us all. There were a number of agreements between Tamil leadership and Sinhala leadership and government people that were made and broken, made and broken. There was an attempt to re-invent the history of Sri Lanka so that 2,000 years ago the Tamils were the invaders, and this was now presented in Sri Lankan material, that the Tamils were the invaders rather than...nobody really knows who got there first, but it suddenly became extremely relevant whether 2,000 years ago the Tamil were the invaders. And there was a lot of anti-Tamil sentiment among the Sinhala built up on the notion that if you let the Tamils have any say any more, they are going to take over, and sort of reinventing fears of 2,000 years ago.

I believe if you review some of the historical documents at the time, you will see this over and over and over and over. I don't think it is any particular secret; it is rather open. Speeches made in Parliament during the era referring to the Tamils as the invaders and, "They have taken our country," and this is the 1960's, a legislator of Sri Lanka saying, "The Tamils are trying to seize our country," as if it didn't belong to the Tamils. So, that tone and then the resultant Sinhala-only type legislation created extreme social unrest.

In the seventies and eighties, the answer to the social unrest, rather than renewed nation building between the two sectors, resulted in extremely oppressive legislation for detention without cause, detention of Tamils, essentially, under a guise of emergency regulations and other legislative mechanisms which would justify mass arrests.

Q. So, in your view, did the Tamil people attempt to fmd a peaceful solution to this problem with self-determination in Sri Lanka?

A. *From 1948 until approximately 1972 or three or four, when the Tigers came into being, yes.*

Q. And...

A. *By that time, it was...probably felt to most Tamils or many Tamils that they simply were not going to have a Sri Lanka that was neither Sinhala or Tamil; that it was going to be us against them, them against us situation until it was resolved with an actual agreement.*

Q. Now, were there elections where the Tamil minority expressed their desire to have a separate Tamil state?

A. *I am not sure you could go so far as to say there was that specific question on a ballot, but certainly with the election of certain Tamil leaders with that particular point of view, I would certainly say that the Tamils did clearly show in the voting box that was a goal, and obviously in the negotiations and discussions between the various leaders of the time, that was clearly a rallying point. I think they are...although today you will see the concept of self-determination discussed in a wide array of choices, some would choose complete severance, some would choose some sort of provincial arrangement such as the situation in Canada, some would choose some other style of political arrangement but still under theoretically one roof I think that beginning in the sixties and seventies, there began to be a lot more talk about the only possibility is complete severance.*

There were however what we call devolution plans, proposals to provide a certain degree of autonomy to the north and east; tried, rejected, tried, failed, not...I mean, it was sort of a relentless history of failure.

Q. I am not mistaken there was a certain amount of communal strife in Sri Lanka?

A. *Yes.*

Q. In your view, was that relevant to the question of the right of the Tamils to use armed force for self-determination?

A. *I think it is clearly, clearly relevant. The communal rioting in 1983 was pretty serious. Many human rights investigators have called it genocidal. I don't think invoking the term "genocide" to the situation in Sri Lanka is extreme. I think given the language of "This is our country and they are invaders," given the enormously high casualty list of numbers of dead bodies of Tamils, given the communal rioting in '83 and other instances where people simply went out on a rampage and found Tamils and hacked them to death right on the streets*

Q. Now...

A. *Obviously, if a process of trying to live together isn't working, communal rioting and a mad genocidal spree such as '83 can only further buttress a call to self-determination and the use of force to defend oneself.*

Q. Now, are there Tamil representatives in the government today?

A. *There are some.*

Q. Is that a relevant factor in determining whether or not the Tamil people have sufficient rights in order to...

A. *Not at all.*

Q. .. .distinguish their right to selfdetermination?

A. *No, not at all.*

Q. Why not?

A. *When you are talking about a right to make a determination of your own political future, you are talking about an opportunity for people to express themselves in a situation where the actual question is presented to them and they are given a reasonable opportunity to decide. The mere presence of a Tamil in an administration to me has nothing to do with an election, a choice or whatever. It may be that there are some Tamil people who consider themselves in allegiance or alliance with the Sinhala point of view in governance, but some of them...*

HIS LORDSHIP: I am sorry, madam, I am sorry, I don't...please forgive me...

THE WITNESS: *Well, many of the...*

HIS LORDSHIP: I don't quite understand what you are saying. Are you saying that because somebody from the Tamil area runs to become a member of Parliament or the Legislature or whatever it is, is in alliance with because of that?

THE WITNESS: *No. I believe you were talking about people who are actually in...*

HIS LORDSHIP: Members of Parliament.

THE WITNESS: ...*Mrs. Kumaratunga's Cabinet.*

MR. WALDMAN: No, I said "in government." Perhaps that is..

HIS LORDSHIP: Well, let us define what you are taLking about.

THE WITNESS: *I am sorry, I was understanding...*

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. I meant in government, but that was a bit ambiguous. There are two questions there, one would be if they were actually participating in the government, and I think that that was the question you were answering?

A. *Yes.*

Q. The second...and is that answer clear, My Lord?

HIS LORDSHIP: When you say "in government," do you mean because you are an American...

THE WITNESS: *Executive.*

HIS LORDSHIP: In the executive Cabinet?

THE WITNESS: *In executive capacity, yes.*

HIS LORDSHIP: All right.

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. Now, if we go to the next step and say the fact that they are...although, at the present time, are there elected representatives, representatives from the Tamil areas in the government?

A. *There are some, yes.*

Q. The fact that there are some Tamil representatives in the government, does that, in your view, affect the right of the Tamil people to self-determination?

A. *No, it does not. They were not elected on a platform of the Tamil people as a whole voting and rejecting self-determination. The question wasn't presented in the election. It was merely this person versus this person to a Legislature, but I see how...I don't see it possible that that could extinguish the right to self-determination.*

HIS LORDSHIP: What you are saying is that one thing has nothing to do with the other. You can have members that sit in Parliament or the Legislature. That doesn't mean that the "Tamil people" may want to have self-determination. That is not a question that was put to them, but it also doesn't mean the reverse.

MR. WALDMAN: Right, exactly.

HIS LORDSHIP: These people...and where I disagree with the witness is that the fact that they may be in government does not mean that they don't want to have self-determination.

THE WITNESS: *This is true also. It may be that some of the Tamil members of Parliament, for instance, in Sri Lanka actually do want self-determination.*

BY MR. WALDMAN:

Q. In fact, is it not correct that at certain points Tamil representatives have been elected on a platform of a separate state?

A. *Absolutely, absolutely.*

Q. Well, then perhaps I can ask you as a follow-up question to the one we were just asking, in your view do the Tamils have effective representation in the government of Sri Lanka at the present time?

A. *In my view, no.*

Q. Why would you reach that conclusion?

A. *Probably a very large percentage of the Tamil population in the north is living in refugee camps and is scattered in the jungle all over the place. There is no direct relationship between them and members of Parliament, because they do not feel that the government, whether we are talking legislation, even Tamil representatives, or the president of Sri Lanka and the executive represents them or has anything to do with them.*

Q. But, given the context, the historical context, the fact that you define the Tamils as a people in the history which led to tne taking up of arms by the Tamil...by various Tamil groups, in your opinion, under international law were the Tamil people or was the Tamil people entitled to take up arms in order to achieve self-determination given the history?

A. *In my view, the possibility of any peaceful resolution of the vindication of the right to self-determination, the possibility was extinguished through the communal rioting in 1983. Accordingly, I view that at that point the Tamil people had a right to vindicate the right to selfdetermination with the use of force, if necessary.*

HIS LORDSHIP: if necessary?

THE WITNESS: *If necessary.*

HIS LORDSHIP: Now, when does it become...

THE WITNESS: *I say I viewed it as being...*

HIS LORDSHIP: When does it, if necessary, become necessary?

THE WITNESS: *I viewed it in 1983.*

BY MR WALDMAN:

Q. As necessary?

A. *As necessary, yes.*

Q .Why?

A. *I think other scholars may disagree at the timing and may place it earlier. Why do I place it as late as '83 and why do I place it as early as '83? As late as '83, because up...from the time of 1948 when there were the promises made up to 1983, in spite of the fact that there had been serious breakdowns and there was a very disturbing, if not nearly genocidal direction in the domestic legislation, I guess I still thought of looking at it...there was a dialogue taking place, there were some understandings reached. But, after 1983, you couldn't really ask a people any longer to sit... you just couldn't say, "Well, wait another bit, wait another bit." The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Charter, the covenant don't say, "You have a right to self-determination only if you..." you know, "...but, you have to peacefully wait until it is handed to you." You basically have the right to self...you have the right to self-determination present time and the right to self-determination existed present time all along.*

I frankly think that the Tamils waited long enough, and it was obvious by 1983 that it was not going to happen without armed resistance, I regret to say. I mean, I think, objectively looking, you could certainly say that the Tamils had a case that it was not going to happen about the use of force.

Q. Now, once a people in the quest of self-determination has a right to the use of force, how does that characterize, under international law. the use of force by those people?

A. *It obviously invokes humanitarian law.*

Q. What are the implicafions of that?

A. *It means that the fighters are combatants for purposes of humanitarian law. It means the military operations are governed by the rules and obligations of humanitarian law. It means the opposition forces, in this case the government of Sri Lanka is also obligated to comply with humanitarian law and is under the protections of humanitarian law and because of the unique place of self-determination in international law, the international community is obliged to side with those fighting for the right to self-determination. It is the only time in armed conflict where third parties must take a side.*

Q. So, are you saying that under international law, third parties, i.e., the government, including the Government of Canada, under the principle of right to self-determination ought to be siding with the Tamils in their struggle for self-determination?

A. *Yes.*

Q. Now, the Government of Canada in its disclosure to us...I think you saw the list of incidents?

A. *Yes, I did.*

Q. The allegation against Mr. Suresh is membership in an organization that is engaged in terrorism?

A. *M'hmm.*

Q.In your understanding of international law, can the incidents that are listed in that appendix be described as "terrorism"?

A. *No.*

Q. Can you explain why not?

A. *They are events that occurred in the course of an armed conflict govemed by the Geneva Conventions and in exercise of the principle of self-determination. Therefore, they must be looked at and analyzed under the applicable Rules of both the Hague Convention, customary Hague law and the Geneva Conventions and customary Geneva law.*

Q. So, some of the incidents, purportedly, because there is no admission that they actually occurred, but based upon the list, purportedly involve attacks upon civilians?

HIS LORDSHIP: But, she just said it is not a perfectly legitimate thing. That is what this witness just said.

MR. WALDMAN: No, I don't think

HIS LORDSHIP: That is what she just said. You asked, you read the list and that is what she answered

MR. WALDMAN: Yes, okay, she said they weren't terrorism.

(To concluded in the next issue)

UNP M.P. meets South African Tamil body

A South African human rights organization, Dravidians for Peace and Justice (South African Chapter), say they have held a meeting with a representative of the UNP, the main Sri Lankan opposition party, in Johannesburg to discuss the current conflict and human rights in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Jayawardanna

In a press release issued on April 22, the DPJ say that two of their representatives, Dr.P.Lingham and Mr.G. Veerabadren, met Dr. Jayalath Jayawardanna at the home of a South African MP, Dr.E.Jassat.

Dr. Jayawardanna had "presented a package put together by the UNP" and "sought a mandate.. and assistance" from the DPJ "to interact directly with concerned groups in Europe" according to its press release. The press release did not elaborate on the nature or contents of the package.

The DPJ said that it had requested Dr. Jayawardanna to call, from within and outside Sri Lanka, for "immediate lifting of food and medicines embargo to the Jaffna area", "an immediate cessation of aerial bombings of civilians" and "the unbanning of the LTTE to allow for engagement in negotiation."

Dr. Jayawardanna had also been requested to "declare that the conflict can no longer be regarded as a domestic matter and that international intervention is required to bring peace to the island", "request third party international mediation" and "call on the international community to stop all financial and military aid to Sri Lanka" according to the DPJ.

The DPJ had also requested Dr. Jayawardanna to call on the Sri Lankan government "to allow for free and unhindered access of all areas of Sri Lanka" by the international media and humanitarian organisations.

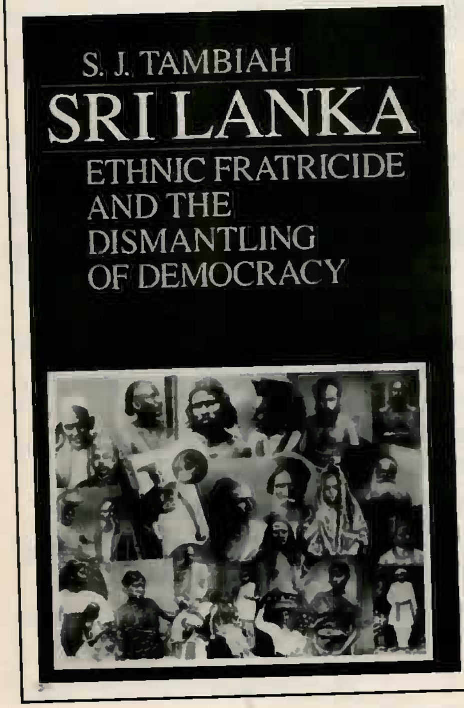
Dr. Jayawardanna had agreed to the DPG's requests, said the press release.

The Dravidians for Peace and Justice say that they are "committed to the upliftment and propagation of human rights values" and that their "current focus is the conflict situation in Sri Lanka and the alleged gross human rights violations taking place there."

The DPJ say they "will pursue any and all peaceful means to attain peace for all Sri Lankans" and that they "are given to believe [Dr. Jayawardanna] is also pursuing peace for Sri Lanka from a human rights perspective."

Dr.Jayalath Jayawardana also had a meeting with Mr.Tommy M.Padotan, the National Coordinator for the PEOPLE AGAINST SRI LANKA OPPRESSION, another powerful Tamil lobby in South Africa. Dr.Jayawardana had the opportunity to meet several other prominent South Africans, including Mr.Basil Moonusamy, Assistant Adminstrative Secretary to President Mandela.

"A book which brilliantly uncovers at several levels the sources of Sri Lanka's current agony"
- Professor W.H.Morris-Jones. University of London



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Sydney conference: Resolution on "Sri Lanka-Tamil Eelam war"

"Withdraw armed forces from the Tamil homeland"

Over 600 people from all over the Asia-Pacific region met at Glebe School, Sydney when the Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference opened on Friday, 10 April 1998. The conference offered a unique opportunity for people committed to democracy, national liberation and social justice to exchange ideas, discuss politics and plan out campaigns. Discussion was facilitated through workshops where participants raised issues and clarified positions.

The Sri Lanka - Tamil Eelam conflict featured strongly in three separate workshops headed by Mr Ana Pararajasingham, Secretary Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations (The Tamil Struggle in Sri Lanka, April 11), Dr Sunil Ratnapiriya, Secretary General, NSSP (Country Report on Sri Lanka, April 12) and Mrs Mano Navaratnam (Women and the Tamil Struggle for Liberation, April 13).

Ana Pararajasingham painted a picture of the immediate consequences of the 15 year-old war in Sri Lanka, traced its causes, and offered some suggestions as to how the conflict could be resolved. In pointing out that the spectre of genocide was one of the most horrific consequences of this war, Mr Pararajsingham stated that "Of the 60,000 or more civilians killed in this war, well over 95% are Tamils. Over 500,000 Tamils have fled the Island, while another 825,000 are displaced within the Tamil Homeland". He drew attention to the phenomena of this being a "war without witnesses" by pointing out that the real nature of Sri Lankaís war was not factually reported because the international media have no presence in the war-torn Tamil homeland æ the actual theatre of war. He then went on to say that "The war has evolved from a classical guerilla war to a conventional war giving rise to the phenomena of two standing armed forces battling each other". He also pointed out that "Democracy has failed in Sri Lanka because its constitution is based on a myth, a myth that the Island is a single nation, whereas it is really an Island of two nations"

Resolution on SRI LANKA - TAMIL EELAM WAR

This conference is gravely concerned by the continued Sri Lanka - Tamil Eelam War and the increasing genocidal dimension of that war evidenced by the:

(a) targeting of civilian population by Sri Lankan forces

(b) the proportion of disappearances, torture, extra judicial killings, rape, arbitrary arrest and indefinite detention of Tamils

This Conference :

- calls upon the Sri Lankan Government for the immediate withdrawal of its armed forces from the Tamil Homeland.

- calls upon both the government of Sri Lanka and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to secure a negotiated political solution that allows the Tamil people to realize its right to self determination with full rights to all the people of Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam.

- calls for genuine negotiations for a political solution be commenced with a neutral third party acceptable to both Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Mano Navaratnam began with a description of the traditional role of Tamil women and then went on to show how the liberation struggle had brought women to the forefront of the struggle. She spoke of the role played by women in the social reforms that were undertaken by the LTTE run administration and the pivotal role played by the women in the administration itself. In her presentation Mano Navaratnam elaborated on the ingenious methods used by the Tamil Liberation forces in combating the ban imposed by the Sri Lankan Government on food, medicine and other essential items by developing alternate food supplies and encouraging the use of native medicines. She also drew attention to the LTTE is commitment to setting up foster homes to care for children orphaned by the war and steps taken to prevent these homes becoming institutionalised. In her presentation Mano Navaratnam drew particular attention to the social reform programs of the LTTE in breaking down caste barriers and the dowry system.

At the end of this workshop a video "Suicide Warriors" depicting the women fighters of the Liberation Tigers was shown.

Sunil Ratnapirya reiterated the NSSP's support for the self-determination of the Tamil people.

Arising from the discussions that followed at the workshops, the following resolution was passed by the Conference at its final Plenary Session.

❏ ❏ ❏

Army Brigadier and Jaffna Mayor killed

◆ The northern Sri Lankan army-controlled Jaffna saw killings of two important personalities within three days of each other. A top officer of the Sri Lankan army , Brig.Larry Wijeratne was killed by an unknown assassin in Point Pedro on May 14.

◆ In another major incident on the same day elsewhere in the north, an estimated number of 20 Sri Lankan troops were killed and several others wounded when the army bus in which they were travelling was caught in a claymore mine at Chettikulam near Vavuniya.

◆ On the 17th May, Mrs.Sarojini Yogeswaran who took office as Mayor of Jaffna three months earlier was killed by an unknown gunman at her home in Nallur.

❑ ❑ ❑

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How India earned the condemnation of the world, but regained her SELF-RESPECT !

S.Sivanayagam

When India emerged into freedom at midnight of 15 August 1947, the man who took charge of the destiny of the country was Jawaharlal Nehru. Historian, man of letters, an idealist and dreamer in many ways, he inherited an impoverished country. Poverty apart, India under Nehru was militarily weak. But yet, Nehru led India with great aplomb. As a leader of the non-aligned comity of nations, his voice was heard across the world. India as a nation was looked up with respect, such was the moral force that the country came to represent. But when Nehru died in 1964, he died a disillusioned man. When Nehru's trusted friend in China, Chou-En Lai marched his forces across the Himalayas in 1962, India was humiliated, and Nehru was shattered. **The man who was the great champion of the abolition of nuclear tests at the United Nations in 1954 had no answer when it came to a near-Chinese invasion of India eight years later.**

It was left to daughter Indira Gandhi to realise that the sheer exercise of POWER that earned respect in the cynical world of international relations. When Pakistan's Yahya Khan unleashed a reign of terror on the Bengali East Pakistan in 1971 Indira Gandhi sent the Indian forces in, which eventually led to the dismemberment of Pakistan and the creation of the new state of Bangladesh. At the height of the war, the United States sent its Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal signalling a threat to India. Indira Gandhi was not unduly perturbed. When her representative in Washington asked the reason for the induction of the Seventh Fleet, Washington climbed down. It was explained that they had to evacuate American nationals..Imagine a whole Seventh Fleet sent in to evacuate a few nationals ! American armtwisting did not end with that. On December 3, the United States announced the cancellation of all outstanding licenses for shipment of military equipment to India, covering to the value of 11.5 million dollars. On December 6, economic aid to India to the value of 87 million dollars was suspended. It will thus be seen that the U.S habit of imposing sanctions on India was not something that happened only in 1998.

With Indira Gandhi's death in 1984, India went into a period of diminished stature in the eyes of the world, due entirely to weak kneed leaderships. India did not even enter into the policy calculations of the U.S. State Department. It was China that constantly engaged U.S. attention. If at all India earned a headline or two in the world media, it was because of a flood or an earthquake. **Even that wily old fox in Sri Lanka -Junius Richard Jayawardene - who had a healthy fear of Indira Gandhi was able to toy around with her son Rajiv Gandhi (whose only asset was his good looks) and his small circle of supercilious advisers in Delhi. Following faithfully the Machiavellian principle - "Only a fool fights his own battles", he manipulated India to fight the Tamil Tigers, a task which he found was too big for him.** Little did Rajiv Gandhi realise (a fact which his mother knew) that the little nation of three and a half million people of Tamil Eelam were the only ones in the entire South Asian region who were emotionally and truly the friends of India and her people. Tamil Eelam could still be the one friendly buffer against an enfeebled Sri Lanka getting sucked into alien influences. If Indian policy continued to be erratic and weak-kneed to a point where the regional power could blissfully shut its eyes to genocide happening next door,there was no hope for that country to exercise any influence in far away parts of the globe. **Now, there is new hope. And that hope has come in the way the new BJP government stunned the world with its nuclear tests.** World-wide condemnation there was, and governments being governments, that was to be expected. Double standards and hypocrisy are vices only where individuals are concerned, not among countries!

President Clinton, as was expected, made the biggest noise. There were several reasons for it.The U.S. is the self-appointed policeman of the world, and Washington expects every other country, especially the poor, developing countries, and more especially democracies, to show subservience to it. The fact that India, unbowed by the initial anger went ahead and detonated two more devices the following day was naturally intolerable in the U.S. eyes. The biggest irritant of course was the U.S. failure to detect the Indian preparations for the nuclear test in time. The feeling that given the U.S. reputation of being able to eavesdrop electronically through spy satellites anything untoward happening anywhere in the world, the Indians had in some way outsmarted them was hurtful.

The flurry of international squeals over the nuclear test could not have come as a surprise to the BJP leaders. Japan, that still carries the radiation scars of American atomic aggression on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, is the only country in the world that can justify its harsh reaction against any nuclear proliferation. **As for the others, it was a case of an inbuilt arrogance of the wealthy towards the poor, the arrogance of power towards passivity, and the arrogance of the white towards the brown and the black.** ❑

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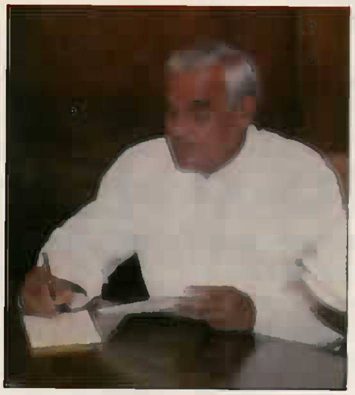
Political Pot Pourri

The bachelor Prime Minister



India, someone remarked, is the most ungovernable country in the world. And today, what is worse, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is heading an equally ungovernable coalition government , and skating on thin ice all the time. For a man with such a heavy burden he comes out, unlike most politicians, as a different kind of human being. An old bachelor, fond of the small pleasures of life, he writes poetry, has an adopted grand daughter who is the apple of his eye, and loves to spend hours playing with his two pet dogs, Sassy and Sophie, and his pet cat Ritu.

Ritu

Apparently no one has asked the Indian Prime Minister why he never got married. That question was however asked of another old bachelor statesman, a one-time President of France, Leon Blum. To a reporter's question, Blum replied: "Well, I have been waiting for the ideal woman".

"So she didn't turn up", said the reporter. "No, no", said Blum, " she did turn up, but she told me she was waiting for the ideal man".

* * *

Bribing the Buddhist bigwigs

Yeltsin in a Russian TV puppet show

Bribe-giving and bribe-taking comes easily to politicians, particularly in the newly-emergent Third World "democracies". But recently Russian President Boris Yeltsin had a problem getting his parliament to accept his new appointee as Prime Minister - a 35year old political novice called Sergei Kiriyenko He did what comes naturally to many politicians. He made it known that parliamentarians who gave support to his candidate were in for two rewards - faster cars and bigger dachas. That seemed to have done the trick. In Sri Lanka, according to Colombo newspaper gossip, President Chandrika Kumaratunga went one better She bribed, not the usual run-of-the-mill politicians, but the very Buddhist symbols of worldly renunciation - the Buddhist High Priests, with offer of luxury Benz cars. Personally, we won't call it a bribe, but perhaps it was an inducement to make the Buddhist powercentres to stop opposing her miserable devolution package. One of the spiritual custodians is reported to have had the best of both worlds. He declared that Benz or no Benz, nothing will stop him from opposing the package, but he accepted the Benz anyway.

* * *

Widowhood & Political will

This is the age of widows. Apart from those widowed by a widow's war, the political scenery is replete with them : the Srimavos, the Srimanis, Chandrikas, the Hemas, Khalidas, the Sonias, not to forget our own little Sarojinis - they are all there asserting their place in the sun. Political power which their husbands enjoyed must logically pass on to them, that seems to be the stern feminine logic. Now, in a little distance away, there is another widow - Imelda Marcos - wife of the late U.S. backed dictator Ferdinand Marcos who looted his country for 20 years. Standing for an election that she has no hopes of winning, she declared : "I'm the only serious candidate in this election who is offering concrete solutions to the country's serious problems...". But the local media does not seem to take her seriously. Wasn't the lady angry? She issued the following stern warning to the local Press. " I'm not a joke. The local Press has become so biased .... why am I being laughed at. REMEMBER THERE IS A SPECIAL PLACE IN HELL FOR THOSE WHO TORMENT A WIDOW. Colombo newspapermen please note.

* * *

A granddaughter Chandrika

Indian President K.R.Narayanan is widely known to be scholarly, cultured, and a gentleman. Coming from a backward caste in Kerala, he married a Burmese lady who gave up her Burmese name and adopted the Indian name of Usha. Their grand daughter's name is Chandrika. How unfortunate !

* * *

S.S.

Continued from inside front cover. . .
and re-structured our military machine to engage in a conventional mode of offensive. Our successful campaign at Mullaitivu strengthened our fire power. On the basis of our newly acquired weaponry we built up artillery and mortar units, anti-tank and anti-aircraft units to form a well integrated military structure capable of confronting a conventional military thrust. We had a long experience about the offensive manoeuvres of the enemy forces. On the basis of such practical experiences we devised new offensive and defensive strategies and constructed impenetrable defence lines. By such method we prepared ourselves to face the biggest ever offensive undertaken by the enemy.

In the "Jayasikuru" military operation the Sri Lankan army has adopted various strategies and tactics. It experimented with new offensive manoeuvres found in contemporary military sciences. Furthermore, it implemented war plans charted by foreign military experts. Yet, the armed forces could not break or weaken LTTE's determined resistance. Rather, such offensive thrusts resulted in serious setbacks and heavy losses to the army.

In this year long single military operation the Sri Lankan army suffered heavy causalities with over 3000 soldiers killed and about 7000 injured. Several specially trained commando units were annihilated and armoured units destroyed. Military stores and arsenals were wiped out. In this lengthy battle, the LTTE fighters secured huge amounts of arms and ammunition. The losses suffered by the enemy were massive. Having suffered such monumental damage, the army has not yet achieved its strategic objective.

In every confrontation during this prolonged battle we gained new experience and learned a lot in the art of war and that has helped to develop our fighting ability. It has further strengthened the commitment and dedication of our fighters. This battle was a baptism of fire through which we emerged strong with new vigour.

In terms of manpower, firepower and resources, the enemy was strong and the balance of military power was in his favour. Yet we had an extra-ordinary weapon which was not in the arsenal of the enemy. The courage and commitment of our fighters was our most powerful weapon in the Vanni battle.

From tomorrow the ‘Jayasikuru" military operation begins its second year and it will prolong further. The Government is determined to pursue this military adventure since it has political implications. Sri Lankan regime is making desperate efforts to regenerate the demoralised army by constantly changing the officers of the command structure and regularly announcing amnesty for its deserters. Sri Lanka's war machine will roll again and thousands of innocent Sinhala youth will be victims to the arrogance aud short sighted policy of the Kandjan aristocratic ruling elite.

Chandrika's Government has imposed media censorship to cover-up the ground realities of the war. It has deliberately concealed facts about military losses and engaged in a misinformation campaign to cheat the sinhala people and the world. But the Government could not cover-up the historical truth that this military operation has been prolonged for a year and has been recorded as the longest battle in the history of armed conflict. This battle will be assessed as a monumental military debacle of the Sri Lankan armed forces. In this major military confrontation the LTTE has demonstrated its remarkable fighting spirit and proved itself to be the liberation army of the Tamil people.

"Jayasikuru' military operation has plunged the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga in to a serious crisis. The Government is driving the country towards the path of destruction impelled by a singular passion to dominate and subjugate the Tamil homeland by military means,

"In conclusion, Mr.Prabhakaran pledges that the operation ‘Jayasikuru" will not end until and unless the occupation army is driven out from the Wanni soil. The LTTE leader finally pays homage to 1300 martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the defence of their motherland. ❑

"Thenisai" Chellappah sings in Sydney

Mr."Thenisai" Chellappah, the famed Tamil Nadu singer of Tamil Eelam liberation songs captivated an audience of over a thousand at Sydney recently. Mr.Chellappah, well-known to Eelam Tamil audiences all over Europe was on his first visit to Australia. When he sang as the finale the popular Tamil song "Believe it; Tamil Eelam will dawn tomorrow", the entire audience got up and clapped hands to the music. At the end of the stirring 5-hour recital Mr.Chellappah was showered with gifts by members of the audience.

* * *

Could this Tamil boy be the king of chess ?

He's only nine, but he has a talent which may one day challenge Kasparov

- reports Rosemary Carpenter in the Saturday Express U.K. of 2 May 1998-05-07

It is even harder to play chess against Thirumugan Thiruchelvam that to pronounce his name. At least you've got half a chance with the name. But then, this is a very special nine-year-old.

His mother Shantha knew from early on that her son was exceptional. "I showed him how to set the board and the very next day when he came home from the nursery he arranged the board himself. And he understood the knight's move straight away.

"We took him to the local chess club when he was not yet four. It was an adult club but they gave him a game and he lasted 25 minutes. They suggested we take him to the Richmond club which has a junior section."

Now Thirumugan has become the youngest British player to achieve an international rating, gained by playing in prestigious tournaments against top players.

If you beat them, you share their rating. When you reach the magic number of 2005, you become internationally rated. An international master might have a rating of 2400; Gary Kasparov, the world champion has 2820.

Thirumugan, at nine years, three months has displaced Luke McShane, who at nine years, six months had previously been the youngest British player to achieve an international rating. But Thirumugan's rating of 2020 is lower than Luke's original one of 2150.

What makes a boy a chess wizard at such a tender age? The Thirumugans are Tamils and their house was burned down by the Sinhalese; they had to hide for three days in a neighbour's lavatory.

Kandiah Thiruchelvam felt Sri Lanka was not the place to bring up a family, so they came to England in 1983.

Thirumugan lives with his parents and elder brother and sister. He is slight and fragile looking, with eyes as big as chess clocks. I ask him what he likes about chess. "It is a good game," he says. "It's quite fun. I started because one day my brother was playing and I cried because I didn't know how to, so my mum taught me. I was three and a half." Thirumugan's father and Shantha are both accountants and their house has a well-ordered look.

On the dining room table is a pile of chess books and Thirumugans chess set. In the corners of the room are two computers on which Thirumugan plays chess. A glass-fronted cabinet houses all his many trophies.

In the boy's bedroom there is a picture of Manchester United on the wall. He says he supports United but has never been to watch them play.

He has friends home from school, but they don't play chess with him.... he's too good. His brother Thirukumaran, 16, no longer plays and Thirumugan could beat his mother by the time he was four.

His hero is Kasparov's great rival, Anatoly Karpov. "He's not a boaster like Kasparov and he's a good player. I met him once. I had a photo of him and I asked him to sign it."

Neither of his parents shows exceptional chess-playing ability. His father doesn't play but takes his son to tournaments round the country most weekends.

Without a sponsor, these visits are expensive. Fifteen years ago, his parents lost all their money, their house and their accountancy practice in the riots in Sri Lanka.

So what does he want to do when he grows up. "A chess player," he says confidently.

"An actuary," says his mother, more pragmatically.

* * *

Janany's Veena recital

The Veena arangetram of Janany Arunachalam took place on 25th April at the Beck Theatre Middlesex, U.K. Janany, who is a pupil of Thirumathy Pavithra Mahesh was accompanied on the Mirudangam by Thiru M.Balachander, on the Gadam by Bangalore Thiru R.N.Prakash and on the Morsing by Thiru Kandiah Sithamparanathan. Selvi Nirusha Vignakumar played the Thambura.

The Veena is an ancient Indian stringed instrument with 24 frets and can produce notes in 4 octaves.It has four strings on the main bridge which are used to produce the musical notes. In addition it has three strings to keep count of the "thalam" or cycle of beats.

Tamil Foundation Annual Lunch

The International Tamil Foundation marks its 10th Anniversary with its annual lunch on Sunday 28th June, 1998, at the Putney Leisure Centre (corner of Upper Richmond Road & Dryburgh Road, London SW 15.).

The speakers on the occassion are **Robert Evans**, Labour Member of European Parliament and **Dr.Sachithanandam Sathananthan**, FounderSecretary of the Action Group of Tamils in Colombo (AGOTIC).

Dr.Sathananthan read for the Ph.D degree at Wolfson College, Cambridge and was Assistant Director at the Marga Institute, Colombo. He is a film-maker and is the producer of two television documentaries, one of which was SUICIDE WARRIORS,(1996) , a halfhour film on the Tamil national struggle which explored specifically the role of Tamil women of the LTTE. It was broadcast by Channel Four Television, London.

Tickets at £9.00 per head could be had from N.Vamadevan (0181-398 6078) or C.J.T.Thamotheram (0181-567 3221). S.A.E. & Cheque in favour of "ITF" before 14th June. No tickets at the door.

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Appreciation

Fr.John Weber: U.S. gift to Batticaloa.

Rev.Fr.John Weber, S.J. who was born in America and who gave his entire priestly life of 51 years to the people of Batticaloa is no more. He passed away at the age of 84 after a sudden illness on April 14. The funeral took place on April 17 at St.Ignatius Shrine College Grounds, Batticaloa, amidst a large gathering of mourners.

In Sydney, Australia, a requiem mass was held in Fr.Weber's memory at Westmead Sacred Heart Church. At the service organised by the Sydney Catholic Association and Tamil Civic Centre, Mr.Tony Vijayakumar paying a tribute on behalf of St.Michael's College Old Boys' Association, said: "Fr.Weber was a tall man, physically, spiritually, and in his dedicated service to the people of Batticaloa . A strong, virile character, with great leadership skills, and a consuming passion in whatever he did, Fr.Weber though not born in our land belonged to our land. It could be truthfully said of him "He was a GREAT SON of Thamil Eelam".

Obituaries

Tommy Abraham

Mr.Tommy I. Abraham, passed away peacefully on March 29, 1998, at Toronto, Canada. He was 88. Mr.Abraham is survived by his wife Lizzie Chelvamany (nee Nicholas),children Bala (Calgary), Nirmala Theivendra (Toronto), and Sathiadevi Manoharan (London, UK), sonsin-law Theivendra Rasiah, Manoharan Selvaratnam and daughter-inlaw Thiru (nee Spencer).

Unit 21, 371, Orton Park Road, Scarborough, Ontario MIG 3V1.

* * *

P.Ganeshan

Ponnusamy Ganeshan of Hemel Hempstead, husband of Santham, father of Kirija Uthayakumar (London), Vanaja Dineshkumar (Canada), Das Ganeshan (London), grandfather of Nilani, Mayan, Byravi, Krishanth and Prashanth, brother of Loshini Thiyagarajah (Kopai) passed away on 3rd May in London. Cremation took place at West Herts crematorium, Garston on 9th May.

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* * *

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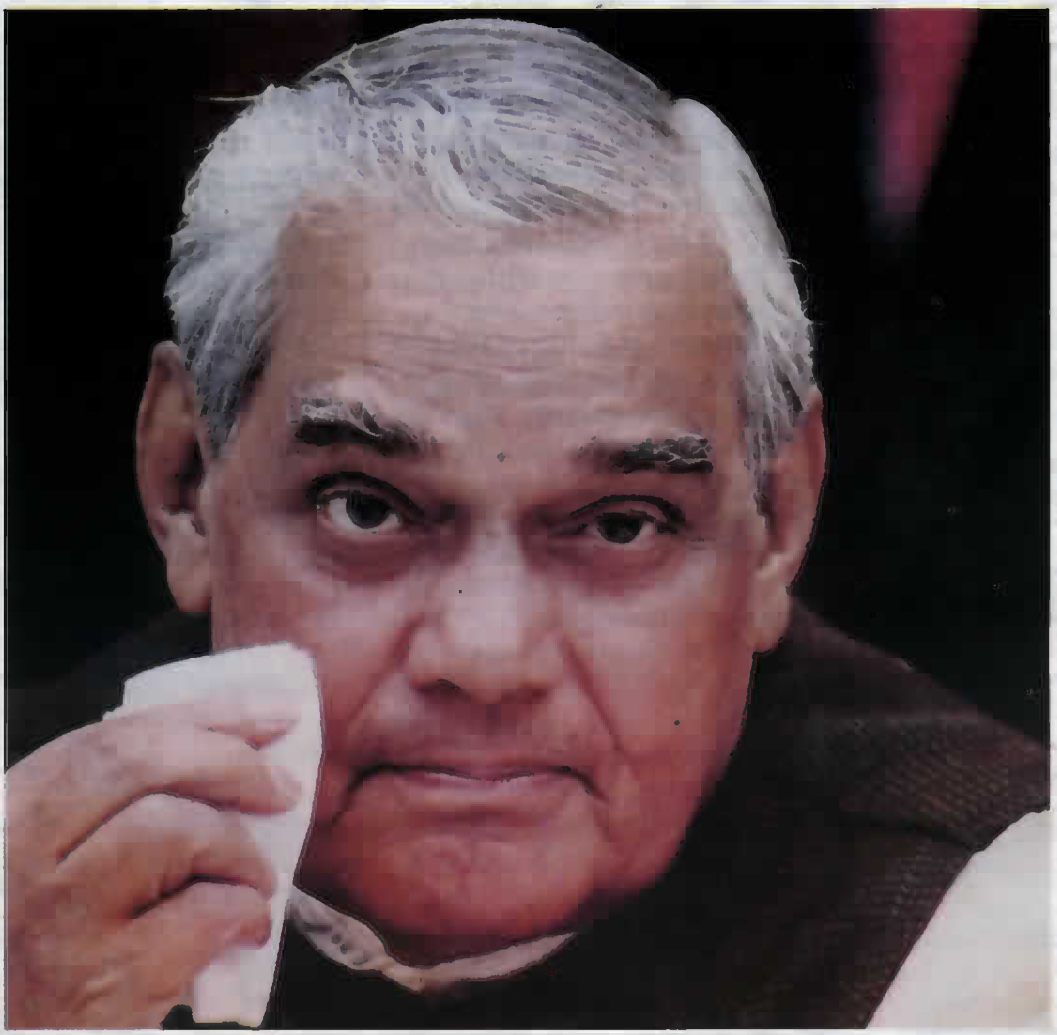
The man who stunned the world !



It is ironic that a man who heads what it seemed the shakiest coalition government in India's history had the audacity to shake a complacent western world out of its patronising attitude towards India. A modest man of 73, Atal Bihari Vajpayee has already been nicknamed Atom Bomb Vajpayee!

It is a matter of satisfaction to Eelam Tamils, that India has for the first time since Indira Gandhi a Prime Minister who is sensitive to their problems, and a Defence Minister in George Fernandes a champion of the oppressed.

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